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A MIRROR TO FRANCE

BY FORD MADOX FORD :

SOME DO NOT...
NO MORE PARADES.
A MAN COULD STAND UP.
LADIES WHOSE BRIGHT EYES.

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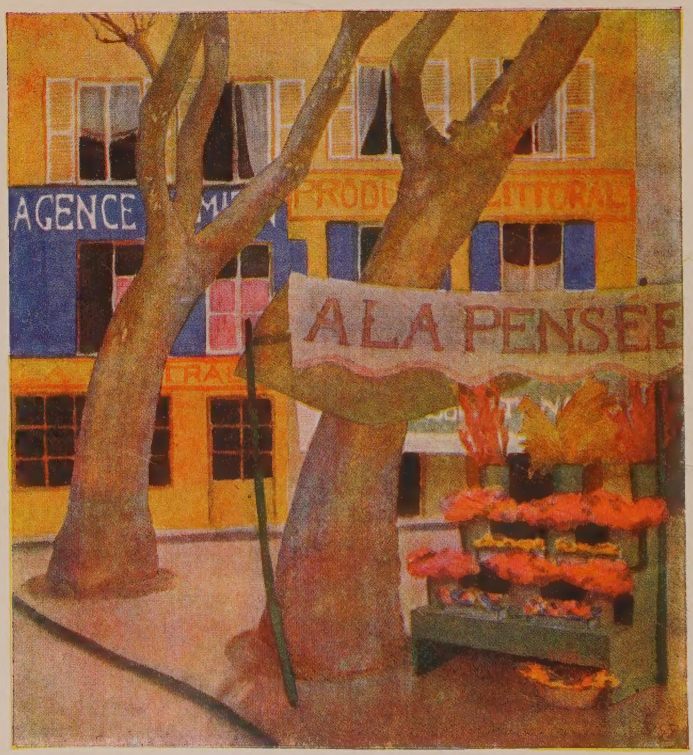
AGENCE
A LA PENSÉE

A MIRROR TO FRANCE

BY

FORD MADOX FORD

AUTHOR OF "NO MORE PARADES," "SOME DO NOT," ETC.

ALBERT & CHARLES BONI

PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

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To
GERTRUDE STEIN

A MIRROR TO FRANCE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

I

"BETWEEN ST DENNIS AND ST GEORGE." . . .

Let me say a word as to the title of this book. It has always been my humble ambition to be a mirror to my time. I have seldom attempted bolder things, and when I have it has not taken me long to see that I had better get back into my box. So, if this book is called a *Mirror to* rather than *of France* it is because, when the writer was thinking out a title, there came into his subconscious mind the idea of paying a tribute to a much-loved country. Thus this might be called the tribute offered by a mirror.

Mirrors are of all shapes and sizes and conformations; one will differ in the qualities of its reflections from all other mirrors as much as one man differs from all other men, or as one witness of an event from all other witnesses. Go into any looking-glass shop such as one of a mysterious

wizard's aspect that I lately visited in a mediæval-Georgian, utterly Parisian street, with innumerable signs of handicrafts and small commerces protruding all over the footways or carved in stone on the house-fronts, with dates from 1535 to 1792; or go into any big departmental store in whose furnishing department mirrors are displayed side by side, poor things, like slaves in the market. And then look at yourself in mirror after mirror. You will see that, not only do mirrors differ, but that you are capable of being so oddly viewed that you may well have misgivings as to your real self. It is not only that distorting mirrors will represent you with a mouth that grins from ear to ear and central portions of your anatomy that seem to thrust you backwards—or as so elongated that you think that at last a wasting and chronic disease of the liver has you in its grasp: it is that the first commercial mirror will represent you as having pockets under your eyes and puce shadows, the next will show you rosy with shiny hair and alert eyes. Or in my mysterious mirror-shop in the turning out of the Boulevard St Germain you will see yourself in the first looking-glass as a moderately normal individual in a glass-roofed warehouse with white-hatted mechanics normally rolling and cutting glass on long tables; but the next glass is old, old; with the mercury gone bluish and with silvery groups of pin-pricks. In that you will see yourself as someone dimly villainous, come to make nefarious purchases of wicked

white-hatted merchants who writhe over alchemisms in the shadowy depths behind you.

Well, this writer is a mirror held up to France; as will-less, really, as any rolled surface of quicksilver, as true—and no doubt as misleading. . . .

A good many years ago, when we were all writing propaganda, I wrote a book that, as far as I was concerned, was mainly about France—about France, that is to say, not about that Paris of the north bank of the Seine that is usually taken to stand for the great, broad, quiet land in which I sit writing. That book was called by the title that I have given to this section, and for long I have looked back on its memory as being that of work I liked best. In spite of the fact that it was published as what was called propaganda, I used to like to think that it would be the book of mine by which I should be remembered if I were to be remembered.

It having been long out of print now, I got hold of a copy of the French edition and re-read it, thinking that I should like to have it republished, for I had written it with great care and sincerity and I was certain that I should to-day endorse every one of its views. And that is the case. I see in the book nothing to repent of and nothing that I want to change. But I think that the time for its republication is hardly now. It is a mirror's reflection of the three countries then

principally engaged in hostilities, and those three countries are now, thank God, friendly enough and likely so to remain. So I had to set to work to make a new book, using only here and there a fragment of *Between St Dennis and St George*, when I thought that I could not now rewrite it better.

The aspect of the world—of the whole geographically intellectual world—has since then undergone a very marked change. At any rate in my eyes. In place of a Boreal threat that seemed to menace our former Mediterranean civilisation, the black cyclonic centre has moved Westward and hovers over the Anglo-Saxon lake. Our former civilisation of chivalries, learnings, arts, crafts, mysteries, abstract thought, frugalities and individualisms came, that is to say, from the shores of the Counts of Toulouse ; all these things are to-day threatened by that Mass Production that is the one symbol of our two-branched Anglo-Saxon commonwealths. For who should say that *we* stand for arts, crafts, mysteries, frugalities, individualisms or any of the rest of it, our contribution to the world having been the white-tiled bathroom turned out by the hundred thousand daily and provided with nickelled fixings and glass shelves ? . . . The product of peoples inhabiting the shores of a cold sea ; whereas your blue, warm bath is ready all day and all night long beneath the stone pines, the orange, lemon and olive trees down there !

Let that at any rate be the symbol. I was lately privileged to see the plans of a DIRECTOIRE BATHROOM that was being erected right on the rocks above that blue sea that leads the eye to Corsica. Normally this was a Directoire salon, with white-panelled walls, gilt thyrsuses, pine-cones, tripods, Directoire couches and day-beds, classical chairs and stools for high-waisted Mesdames Récamier! But . . . only touch a spring on the wall and Glory! Glory!

The panels sprang back and you perceived, deafenedly, marble tanks set into the floors, shower-baths, sitz-baths, marble basins, spouts of sweet water, sea-water, bath-salted water, warm-scented alcohol, squirting, pouring, sizzling, from above, from below, from all round so that the noise of a whole Atlantic of foamings completely drowned the pensive surgings of the blue sea beneath the open windows. *And all the taps were of solid gold!* In the form of eagles, and not Directoire eagles, either.

A symbol! . . . But what a queer symbol of the permanence of the Mediterranean drag on the peoples of the world. By whatever means you conquer, or in whatsoever hemisphere, you, like Brennus of old, will on those shores set up your replica of your Boreal and barbaric wigwam. . . . I too if I have any luck.

I will not claim to be the first European to write that the late war changed the equipoise of material civilisation from the Mediterranean to

the Atlantic, for the other day I noticed in a French paper that some public speaker had somewhere stated that fact. But I think I must have been one of the first to be profoundly and very gloomily impressed by the thought of that cold, grey lake round which pullulate our Nordic races.

Nordic is said to be an unscientific term, but it is so convenient and so accurately descriptive of what we are, from Birmingham to Chicago and farther, that I just mean to use it. We are a great conglomeration of chilly races, born beneath grey skies taking pride in the more or the less efficient systems of heating that we employ in our apartments; keeping ourselves warm also by jumping about, and then on the one side of the Atlantic over-eating and on the other over-drinking. Of Thought we are usually incapable; frugality we despise; we believe before all things in the doctrine of Something for Nothing, so we have nearly forgotten the impulses of chivalric generosity that once, rudimentarily, raised us above the brute creation. Of the Arts we know nothing; we are as nearly as possible illiterate. Wherever we go in any numbers the civilisation, the thought, the arts, the simplicities and the gentlenesses of the native races die, whether it is to Hong Kong, the Philippines or merely to the Boulevard Montmartre.

Before the late war we showed, as I have said, traces of Mediterranean culture. . . . Our religion at least was vaguely a religion of the poor:

of temperance, continence, of not judging, of not committing usury . . . even of manners, a little classical learning and some love for the better parts of the past. But all that—for all one can tell from the public prints and contact with individuals, from study of the curricula of Universities and the rhetoric of prominent public speakers—all that has been wiped out or is being wiped out with a complacency reminiscent of that American who, being told that a lamp in a shrine—I think at Placenza—had been burning continuously for fifteen hundred years, blew it out and said: "Well, I guess it's out now!"

That is us. I met the other day a professor of chemistry at a British Northern University who asked me who was Ulysses; next day I met a graduate of Poughkeepsie who asked a French lady: "Who *was* this Nap-olly-ong they make such a fuss about here?" And yet we are not happy.

I imagine there can have been few races more a prey to either feverish or morosely gloomy depressions than are we Anglo-Saxons. From each side of the Atlantic goes up a wail as to the decay of the national spirit, and so panic after panic sweeps across our lands. One lot of us is so madly prosperous that its old republican characteristics are said to have been swamped; the other lot is so madly impoverished that business can never again be as usual—as if it ever had been!

Here then is presented to you a picture more than anything of how to be happy—of people intensely individualistic who intend to remain intensely individualistic; of small shopkeepers who intend to remain and only to deal with small shopkeepers; of people with adequate means of living who intend to retain adequate means of living but to leave it at that; of a people of some culture who get enough pleasure out of their culture to remain a people of some culture; of a people whose peasant families work immensely hard in order that one member of the family may practise an art or indulge in abstract thought; and of a people less represented by its governments than any other people that ever was.

Not to beat about the bush, then, I had better state the moral, the ethical or the social thesis of *A Mirror to France*; for, not being very strong in these things, I do not know the difference between morality and ethics, nor where the moral melts into the social and, since all authorities differ as to these matters, I had better leave it at that. The *chose donnée* then of this book is: that chivalric generosity, frugality, pure thought and the arts are the first requisites of a Civilisation—and the only requisites of a Civilisation; and then that such traces of chivalric generosity, frugality, pure thought and the arts as our pre-war, European civilisation of white races could exhibit came to us from the district of Southern France on the shores of the Mediterranean where

flourished the Counts of Toulouse, olive trees, the mistral, the Romance Tradition, Bertran de Born, the Courts of Love and the only really amiable Heresy of which I know. It came to us mostly because the continual pressure of all time has made us press southwards to conquer and to sack those regions: then, having conquered and sacked, some of us returned with oranges or olives or psalters or songs—or even garlic!—and so sowed seeds of civilisation in climes that, as I have said, it is convenient to call Nordic.

For it is to be remembered that if the greater part of this country, not to travel out of France, be civilised—say as far north as the Île de France, or, to be generous, as far north as the Île de la Cité, on which rises Notre-Dame de Paris—that process did not begin until the King of the Île de France conquered and sacked and destroyed the Counts of Toulouse, the olive mounts, the Courts of Love and the Albigenses. . . . And naturally he had to call an Anglo-Saxon in to do it for him.

So, having destroyed what they could not carry away and tortured, hung and burned those that they could not convert, the Anglo-Saxon general with his Nordic troops, supporting the mistral as best they could, returned to the Île de France bearing with them the Romance Tradition, some poems, some glimmerings of the nature of chivalry, a taste for olives, *bouillabaisse*, garlic and amiable paganisms such as distinguish to this

day all the inhabitants of real France, which is one, indivisible and unchanging.

For do not believe that, once France had assimilated Provence, she ever changed. She cannot; for her problem is unchanging. It is that, a white race, she lies between us Nordics—who are pink—and that Mediterranean towards which we for ever press, making an armed irruption through France once every two or three decades and an annual winter invasion of chequebooks, barbaric bathrooms, hideous manners and imbecile sports.

But the real, quiet France of the broad farmhouses and the little towns that you shall see from the great *rapides*—that France never changes. Ploughing, harrowing, sowing, harvest, *ouverture de chasse*, vintage—these, with the traditional rites, fanfares, beat of drum and other pleasant noises go on for ever. You will be told in Paris drawing-rooms, on the Corniche, and by the journals of Bloomsbury and Greenwich Village that what I am going to write about Félicité applied to the year 1825 and to the year 1625, but that it is no longer true. Do not believe it.

In the France that I know the workmanship of handicrafts and gardens and woodlands and inn-kitchens and wine-cellars and vine-yards; the frugalities; the fêtes; the austerities; the relaxings: all these things overwhelmingly continue. Mme Aubain still sits beside the white wainscoting, looking through the windows at the life of the street; Félicité is still at work

from kitchen to *grenier*; *notaire*, small banker; peasant-proprietor; physician; shepherd; housewife; market-stall; town-drummer; *abbé*; hotel-keeper; *marchand de vin*; blacksmith; watchmaker; chair-caner; bellows-mender; wood-cutter; local *haute bourgeoisie*; local *moyenne* and *petite bourgeoisies*; local barons and marquises, even, are still all in the places where they have been for half a thousand years. The French of Paris will tell you that France is going to the dogs; that is partly because it is always pleasant to say that one's country is going to ruin: partly because the chief occupation of Parisians is to turn out ministries so as to get pickings out of the taxes coming in from the departments—and how can you turn out ministries without chanting of ruin?—and it is very largely because Parisians cannot get servants. They can't; they don't deserve them. In the country one can be—one is!—very much over-servanted because servants are too easy to get.

As for such Anglo-Saxon commentators as say that my France is not the France that they know, try to remember that the France about which I am writing is one to which Anglo-Saxons have not much penetrated. If they had invaded it I should not have gone there and so should not have written about it. As for statistics . . . do not believe them either! I do not believe that there is any French official who could compile an accurate statistic of anything even if he wanted to—and I am absolutely certain that

no Frenchman wants to. He knows too well what use will be made of his statistics by Anglo-Saxon commentators—and he knows too well what will happen to his *pays* if once he lets the politicians in Paris know how prosperous, deep-rooted, tranquil, rich and cheerful his *pays* is and how good life is beneath the shadows of its belfries. And to understand France—not Paris—you must realise how deep a passion is that of the French for their *pays*. They use the word not only to mean their home country-side but also their fellow-townsmen or villagers. . . . And you won't come any nearer to deep pride and emotion in France than when, having asked your Paris *femme de ménage* something about someone she has recommended to you, you hear her answer :

" Mais . . . c'est un mien pays ! " But to that I shall return.

Well then, this book is a personal record : a purely personal record ; reflections in a perfectly impersonal mirror. There is nothing in it taken from other people's works on France—and indeed it is not a " work " ; it is the purest, the most will-less impressionism. When, in the morning, I think about the day's writing I close my eyes and views of the castle of Beaucaire, and the fair-ground and the Fair and the swift Rhône and the castle of King René across it, come radiantly against the lids. Then I write about that. It is only one way to make a book—but it is the

only way I know. As for its form—I have begun where the spirit moved me and left off when I think that for the time I have written enough. To all writers there comes—at any rate to me there certainly comes—a moment when one's voice seems to be going on and on . . . and then on. And one starts as if from a dream and says: "My God! Can anyone in the world stand any more of this?" That is a good time to leave off: perhaps one might even cut out a little.

II

Try how he will, an Impressionist's book about an actual place or an actual man is bound to assume a rather reminiscential air. The mere fact that he relies on his own experiences alone—*Fidandomi di me più ché di un altro!* as says the Impressionist who visited Heaven, Hell and Purgatory to make a Comedy—that mere fact makes his impressions come in a certain sequence and be coloured to some extent by priority. It has in fact taken me a good deal of time to arrive at my present views of this country in which, in one way and another, I have spent a good deal of time physically, and in which, intellectually speaking, I have passed nearly the whole of my life. And no doubt my later views have been profoundly influenced by my first impressions of the country —or by the school views of France that were impressed on me before ever I came here. Those were probably markedly Napoleonic and very

insubstantial. As school-boys we had the idea that Napoleon and his troops and his eagles ought to have been Englishmen; as they would not be Englishmen it had been our painful duty to say: "Up, Guards, and at 'em!" or, closing our telescope, to command: "Order the whole line to advance!" as the legend reached us. And we blushed to the roots of our ears when the name of Sir Hudson Lowe was uttered before us, and we used to say: "He at least was no Englishman!" Sir Hudson having been Buonaparte's gaoler at St Helena. . . . Ney, the Beau Sabreur, on the other hand, was an Englishman—Us, of our school!—to the backbone. So was the father of Casabianca—because he was an Admiral.

Naturally also du Guesclin and Bayard were at heart Englishmen and so, certainly, would Bertran de Born have been could we ever have heard of him—and upon my soul I believe that the Chèvre de Monsieur Seguin of whom we read at school was an English goat, the wolf being a Foreigner! I don't know quite what we made of Joan of Arc. But the point was that, militarily speaking—and at school we had only the military point of view!—ours was a common civilisation: we rejoiced as much over the prowess of du Guesclin as over the successes of the Talbot, and the proud saying: "The Guard dies but never surrenders!" thrilled us even a little more than: "Order the whole line to advance!" because it was followed by tragedy. Yes, the eagles, the

standards, the brass helmets with the horsehair plumes bending forward in the charge through the smoke of battle . . . those were as much part of our own standards of valour as anything that we ourselves could produce—even to the wreck of the *Birkenhead* or the legend of Trafalgar.

So that yesterday, towards November dusk, when all Paris turns blue and purple and just for a moment magic with an orange pane showing here and there beneath the dropping plane leaves, coming in a taxi down the Boulevard Sébastopol towards the South Side and being blocked in the Place du Châtelet suddenly, for an unknown reason, one's heart stopped, one's pulse leapt. Paris, where one leads one's humdrum bourgeois existence of the hard worker with regular hours, is so dully just a flat, big town without standards or drum-taps or any legend of Napoleon, so that when on a bridge or a building you see "N" you feel a queer sensation as if a mastodon had come alive . . . my Paris is so remote from the thought of the military glories of France! But undoubtedly amongst all the rumble and outcry, making as it were a darkening fabric of street noise, a thin, thrilling tearing of noise was manifesting itself. . . . Cavalry bugles!

And there went slowly by, dim-blue grey with mouth-pieces of brass, riding, the trumpeters of a battery of seventy-fives—the ugly things with the peering muzzles as to which two minutes before I would have sworn that I would die before I would

want to see them again. . . . But the bugles, swelling, proceeding so slowly, dying so slowly on the ear! . . . Ah, that was one's youth making a brief visit to one once again!

Before that the most concrete military phenomenon that ever moved me in France—for actual warfare had in it so little of the military or the pompous!—was the brown, fading and rustling wreaths of immortelles crepitating in the chilly winds round the statue of Strasbourg in the Place de la Concorde. And I imagine that that was the first French manifestation that I can get back to now, for my earliest visits to France must have taken place when I was so very young that I remember nothing about them.

There are of course other atmospheres of other militarisms that the boyish mind could recapture from place to place all over France to-day even. There is the Château Gaillard, there is the Citadelle at Carcassonne, there is Mont-St-Michel itself, there are the castle of Aigues-Mortes, the harbours of Brest and Toulon. Standards still droop over the tomb in the Invalides; the equestrian statues of the Maid of Domrémy shine here and there in the sun and, here and there between the dunes of the Pas-de-Calais and the pebbles of the Crau, there are trophies set up and inscribed: "*A Toutes les Gloires de la France.*" But if martial glories are to be commemorated the French have, gloriously enough, given from their martial coffers alms to the Arts.

And the Arts have given such splendour back to the memory of French arms. . . .

To look from one of the central windows of the palace of the Louvre right over the emplacement of the vanished Tuileries ; right along the Champs Élysées ; right beneath the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile and feel the glance descending the air along the Avenue of the Grande Armée—right to Versailles ; to traverse this great vista, these grey, arid and swept splendours going from Palace of the Administration to Palace of the Administration ; to feel sinking into you the consciousness of this tremendousness of elegance, this elegance of tremendousness ; to think that these great spaces of the earth were devoted to the outgoing aspirations for glory, to the incoming triumphs, decorated with laurels, of those men with long, scarlet coats, tricornered hats, steenkirks, ruffles, halberds, grenades ; whose semi-deified commander was le roi Soleil in his long, curled wig, his greaves, his thong-bound be-sandalled feet, his cuirass embossed to show you the wars of Troy and his truncheon tipped with the lilies ; to think that these great spaces of the earth were devoted to the other incoming triumphs, headed with eagles, of dense masses in the blue coats, of dense masses of the splendid chargers dominated by the brass helmets ; to be for the moment at the Louvre or at Versailles and to have these images rise in your mind, or to let this influence creep like a gas all over your being—that is for the moment to let war itself

become as nearly deified as was ever le roi Soleil by his painters, his sculptors, his *abbés*, his fiddlers and himself. And I suppose that to be inspired by these glories of France, to dare with a fine gesture final dissolution for the sake of the traditions of France—that is to come as near making war a fine thing as war ever came near it between the day of Marathon and those days, so different, that were only yesterday. To have died for France is very nearly to have secured immortal life!

But those glories are so absolutely and so inexorably things of the past—and so they were already many, many years ago. And there are such other glories for the country of the lilies to fall back upon!

The rustling of the immortelles as I first saw them, as a boy, in the icy December of the most windswept of all open spaces—the rustling of the immortelles round the base of that crowned, enthroned stone effigy of a Lost Town seemed to commemorate a death as absolute, as irrevocable as that commemorated by dead flowers on the grave of a forgotten ploughman, and if one wished even then to realise them one had, difficultly, to reconstruct them as, in *Salammbô*, Flaubert painfully reconstituted the vanished immensities of Carthage. You had then the Paris that I knew as a boy; a Paris of succeeding winters spent in a tranquilly luxurious, gilded *appartement* of a very rich Paris-American relative; a Paris where life was the most ordered thing in the world;

where ancient ladies and very old men spoke always in apparently saddened whispers, and where the most startlingly modern figure that one met was that of Émile Ollivier, the last, Liberal, Prime Minister of Napoleon III. There the place of Sport was taken by extremely decorous, slow promenades in the broad gravel spaces of the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne just before one drank tea from the immensely heavy silver equipage—the slow walks with an immense red sun just touching the low trees of the Bois—those trees that were not yet twenty years old, because the *sapeurs-pompiers* had burned down all that boscage by means of streams of petroleum from blazing hose-mouths—in 1870. On the Arc de Triomphe there were the shell-marks; on the statue of Strasbourg, the immortelles; the Palace of the Tuileries had vanished and in the last sunlight of the winter day we made our half-hour promenade—marquises of the Third Empire, *rastaquouères*, old Brazilian duchesses, authentic millionaires, purveyors of lap-dogs leading by their six or seven strings six or seven tiny objects, as large as rats. Against the sun all these beings were clear-cut silhouettes with long shadows; when one had one's back to that copper-coloured orb they appeared indistinct, misty, fused.

And I am bound to say that that Paris and the France that in some sort it represented, saddened, disillusioned, with fragments of the Third Empire, like M. Ollivier and dim echoes of the Franco-Prussian War seeming to whisper from the shell-

marked walls ; with the royalist inhabitants of the Faubourg St Germain shut behind their high walls and the sham bull-fighting ring on the opposite side of the Avenue—that Paris and that France singularly coloured my imagination and my ideas of what France was.

For all these people were unimaginably aloof from questions of government, of administration or of international relationship. I have never, even in the United States, met people so aloof from the public affairs and even the news of the day as were the French that in those winters I used to meet. Except when the Government incommoded them by some measure of taxation the Third Republic might never have existed, and the politics that they discussed were the politics of the closing years of the Third Empire. Later, the heroines of these salons as I knew them were the upper-class women who threw pepper in the eyes of troops and gendarmes coming to dispossess the nuns of this or the other convent.

The Dreyfus case, however, worked a profound change on the face of French life, and it was at the trial at Rennes that I began to have a sense of the profound cleavage that was to come between opposing schools of French thought. I shall write a little more about this later—but it was at that moment, in the changing lights and shadows of that court-house, that I, an Englishman with very few traditions to revere and next to no sacred things with which to come in contact, had a glimpse suddenly of extraordinary possibili-

ties of psychology. One had suddenly revealed to one the fact that if one were a native of this country that was within sight of one's own shores one might take up a position which to an Englishman with his fabled love of justice as such, with his real satisfaction in a decorously slow-moving legal system, would seem monstrous and horrible. We say so often "let the skies fall in so but justice prevail" that after a time we really begin to believe that we have that aspiration. We should, many of us, I fancy, have welcomed in those days the absolute collapse and disgrace of the British Army supposing that that collapse and disgrace were necessary to secure a theoretic justice for any one officer or any one private of any British regiment, and indeed I fancy that in those days we should have protested only platonically if Parliament had refused to vote the annual Army Bill and if, in consequence, H.M. Army had ceased to exist.

But Rennes was an entirely different matter. The prisoner on trial undoubtedly had a certain aura of tears and suffering; nevertheless that not very prepossessing figure had endured with the extreme toughness of a low vitality tortures that would have crushed the lives out of every one of us his auditors, and in that ancient part of the world one was too much surrounded by evidence of the glories of France to let anything that could by implication besmirch those glories seem other than questionable. As to that too I shall say a little more later. What I want to get

in here is that the effect of the Dreyfus trial, whilst it split French life in two on lines of a cleavage not merely political, and whilst it permanently embittered almost every type of social contact, was to cause a complete indifference to public life to spread from the limited society of the Faubourg St Germain to every stratum of French Society—an indifference that to-day is the most marked feature of French life. Whether you belonged to the extreme Right, to the extreme Left or to the solid Centre the conviction was forced on you that out of this disgustingly conducted *affaire* one fact shone—that the ordinarily decent man had had no voice in the conduct of either defence or prosecution, and that he never could have.

A sort of Abstract Justice prevailed; the Army appeared, as the phrase is, to go out; the Church which supported the Army was beaten to its knees; the Left was discredited; the Right was almost more discredited; innumerable scandals as to every sort of prominent man filled the public ears and Literature itself seemed to fall with the general ruin of the State. For I think that to the average Frenchman Anatole France and Zola were almost more distasteful than subsequently were Barrès and his supporters, and that by becoming a battle-ground for Dreyfusards and their opponents even the French Academy lost very much in prestige.

Be that as it may, it was in other fields than those of military glory or the arts that France, as if she were about to cut adrift from her past,

seemed to aspire to new glories. In those days—between the Trial and the War—you would hear that it was in motor industries, in aviation, in the breeding of horses and even in football and other field-sports that France was to earn new distinction. What exactly was expected of this new France that fairly buzzed from the Boulevards to the Channel with tidings of regeneration I do not know, nor indeed do I know what has become of them, though I thankfully welcome their disappearance. For France has to be unchanging or we cannot live. Certainly the last thing that the French of France as opposed to the French of Paris awaited was the long and breathless struggle of the trenches. Even the immortelles round the statue of Strasbourg were then no longer there. They had disappeared from the calculations of humanity.

And even when on the walls of a refectory of a regiment situated in the most august citadel of France I saw the inscription: "*Soldats, deux étendards du —ème Régiment sont dans le musée de Potsdam; n'oubliez jamais!*" I did not imagine that a recovered Alsace and Lorraine had figured in the mind of whoever it was that had caused that inscription to be set there. It seemed to me to be no more than a part of the general aspiration towards keeping fit that then pervaded the whole world.

And indeed the officers of that regiment confirmed me in that idea, for they were vastly more interested in football than in their lost standards,

and vastly more proud because they numbered an International amongst their mess than of all the past glories of their corps. They would talk a little about books, but mostly it was football.

Well, the war came and brought back once more to France the conviction that whether she likes it or not her job is to stand between us Nordics and the Mediterranean littoral. And the Frenchman of France has so determinedly set his face against any more demonstrations of armed force that he will rather seek from other nations the support that he must have by reclining on any other glories than those of be-laurelled standards. These glories are those of the arts and Pure Thought, but of those I am not going here to discourse, for Anglo-Saxondom cares nothing about them, and if I asserted that Flaubert and his contemporaries enlisted more than a million men to fight lately for France I should not be believed. Indeed a fierce young Frenchman of the modern school to whom I made that assertion, adding that those writers were of more value to France than the most fantastic increase of the birth-rate that he was likely to bring about —that fierce and stalwart white hope of a certain school of writers became exceedingly enraged with me. For, to-day you must not speak of Flaubert in France. . . .

But I shall!

There is, that is to say, one type of "*gloire de la France*" that Anglo-Saxons may dimly begin to appreciate. I mean Félicité.

Do you know why it is that every woman in the world, if she has the chance, gets her hats from Paris? No doubt it is partly a matter of fashion, or of the French genius for design; but these things change and are greater or less in degree. There is, however, one unvarying factor—the fact that only in Paris are feathers and trimmings so securely and intelligently sewn into a hat that that hat after five hours' wear or after two months' wear will have exactly the same line and the same aspect that it had when it left the stand of the hatmaker's *atelier*. That is France, and that is why France is really so wonderful.

For it means that when a leader of men arises in France he will find men—and that can be said of no other country. Those little, extra drawings tight of the strong thread that keeps the feathers and trimmings in their places are the symbols of all the greatness and all the beauty that France has given to the world—are the symbols of the spirit of Joan of Arc, of the Cathedral of Amiens, and of the City of Carcassonne. They are the symbols of free and proud human beings giving attention to detail because honour demands that this attention shall be given. This love of "finish" made France great at Waterloo in the minor matter of warfare, and made France still great yesterday when warfare had become relatively of even less importance. The care with which a parcel is done up in one of the large bazaars of the street running along the quays in Boulogne; the care with which an omelette, a

salad and a slice of ham will be served to you in any roadside inn near Beauvais; the care with which a long-haired person dressed like a *rapin* will turn out a little fragment of *vers libre* on the south bank of the Seine; the care with which the jeweller in the rue de la Paix will set minute diamonds into the engine-turning of the case of a tiny watch; the care with which beneath his immense screen of cypress and of yew the Provencal cultivator of first-fruits will set his seeds into the ground; the care with which on the quays in Marseilles the cook will apportion the exact ingredients of his *bouillabaisse*: all these things are symbols of, and in exact apostolic succession from, the little bas-reliefs of David and Goliath, that are as exactly proportioned, as decorative and as impressionist as any Japanese work, on the portals of the Cathedral of St Gilles on the border of the Camargue near Aigues-Mortes. And all these things, again, are symbols of, and in exact apostolic succession from, the proud boast of Joan of Arc before her judges, that, when it came to the use of needle and thread, she feared comparison with no woman in all her district of France.

The fact is that, with all these littlenesses of finish, the French people, the French men and women, keep themselves singularly in contact with the realities of life. They know, extraordinarily and beyond the knowledge of most people, which things are real and which illusions. Beside such a Frenchman the average Anglo-Saxon is a senti-

mental and impractical dreamer; the German a loud-mouthed and boastful romanticist. The exact causes of these international phenomena are difficult enough to descry. Why is it, for instance, that almost any fat Frenchman that you sit next to in a café of a public square in a city of Lyons will have a pretty exact knowledge of the values of life, whereas no Englishman from Berwick Bridge to Kynance Cove has ever yet given any attention to this important subject? Hundreds of years ago the French peasant evolved from life the immense lesson "*la vie, voyez-vous, n'est jamais si bonne ni si mauvaise que l'on ne croit.*" And that great truth, along with the doctrine of chances which is also of French evolution, has had an immense influence on the moulding of French character. The highest and most subtle English leader of thought has never, within historic times, got beyond the practical philosophy of Piers Plowman, who considered that in this world there were fortunate lives and unfortunate lives, and that at the end we should come before the final court where the poor shall dare to plead. In Anglo-Saxondom, that is to say, we still see life as a matter of careers so much that we neglect frequently the daily tasks by which those careers are created and directed. In France, on the other hand, by the great bulk of the people, life is accepted as a grey, or at best a piebald, matter. In consequence, in the great bulk of the French people there is very little restlessness. The farmer remains upon his acres; the *sabotier*

goes on turning out sabots; the *cantonnier* is content to remain tending his little patch on the main road, and these men put their hopes of glory in that curious, vague and very definite thing they call *l'honneur*. That form of honour has about it little of the Englishman's commonplace picturesqueness. It has nothing to do with always telling the truth, with taking a cold bath every morning, or with asserting one's rights. It can subsist side by side with avarice, with meanness, with personal dilapidation and with want of cleanliness. It can endure the oppressions of very bad forms of government; nevertheless, without it the individual would die. For it is the honour of the *métier*, allied in some respect to the honour of the German superman, and yet differing essentially, inasmuch as it is always a matter of personal discipline and of traditions. The *sabotier* may have the meannesses of the *sabotier* and his want of personal cleanliness, but he must not have more than is in the tradition. He is, as it were, a member of the Honourable Company of the craft, and he must keep up at once the traditions of his craftsmanship and the tradition of those craftsmen as members of society. It is because of that tenacious, rather than stern, sense of *l'honneur* that France, in spite of the worst of governments, retains always, or recovers miraculously soon, her equilibrium. From the point of view of militarist, of politico-economic efficiency, the Second Empire was about as bad a form of government as could be

imagined. "*L'empire c'était la paix.*" It was the dominion of a dreamer who permitted much dancing, who saw war spectacularly and romantically, who built castles in the air which included a gigantic Latin Union the world over. I have always liked the Second Empire and the third Napoleon. But certainly his was the worst form of government for a world that included Bismarck, von Moltke, von Roon, von Treitschke and those other formidable savages. Nevertheless, so little had this bad form of government affected the French people that France's recuperation after 1870 remains one of the national marvels of the world. I have heard it said that various ministries of the Third Republic have been unsatisfactory. I dare say they have been; I dare say they haven't. France, in spite of all governments, with her traditions of the little milliners who sew feathers into hats, and of the Saint of Domrémy who, when it came to her needle, feared no woman in France, is the product of the farmers and the *sabotiers* and the *cantonniers*, each with his *quelques sous* in a stocking up the chimney; each sober, hard-working, without many illusions as to life, tenacious of the honour of his craftsmanship, of his village, of his *arrondissement*, of his Midi, or of his Nord, and able to say: "Les sabotiers ce sont de bons enfants," or "Qui est-ce qu'il y a de plus heureux que les cantonniers?" And behind all these men, these villages, these *arrondissements*, these departments, patient and with no great illusions

of any kind, there remains, uniting them all—France.

"Pendant un demi-siècle, les bourgeoises de Pont-l'Évêque envièrent à Mme Aubain sa servante Félicité."

This simple sentence is the beginning of the story which, at this moment, is of most significance to the world. It means that for fifty years the middle-class housewives of Pont-l'Évêque envied Mme Aubain her servant Félicité. Nevertheless, exactly and rightly to translate that simple sentence is a task of almost unheard-of difficulty. Let us consider for a moment these verbal exactitudes. Let us take the words: "*Pendant un demi-siècle.*" If we say "During half a century" the words have not a quite English sound. If we say "For fifty years" the period is too exact in appearance. It would give the suggestion that Mme Aubain was about to celebrate a golden jubilee. And the opening words of a story are of immense importance because they strike a note in the reader's mind, so that if we start the reader anticipating the celebration of a golden jubilee, and if no such celebration take place, the reader's mind will be a little confused. In the French the sentence suggests no event of any kind, not so much as the shadow of an event. The clear, cold sentence, with its cadence just sufficiently long to leave the reader wishing for the next syllables, dictatorially limits the mind to the consideration, firstly, of Mme Aubain, and then, by the careful

reservation of the servant's name to the last words, indicates with absolute precision that the main interest of the story will be the servant Félicité. The use of the word "*bourgeoises*" indicates that Pont-l'Évêque is a town or a large village of sufficient importance to contain several families in fairly comfortable circumstances. The note thus exactly struck in the reader's mind amounts to this: that the story will concern itself with an affair lasting fifty years, that the affair will not contain any memorable events, and that it will centre round the life of a faithful servant—for Félicité was for fifty years in the service of her mistress, and the other housewives of the place envied Mme Aubain.

We must therefore not commence our rendering by saying: "For fifty years." On the other hand, "During half a century" is not quite right. I do not know why it is not quite right—I fancy that the word "during" rather implies sequences of similar or dissimilar but not continuous actions spread over a given period. I think we should be using correct English—correct idiomatic English—if we said: "During the next two centuries the Danes made repeated attempts to break the power of the Heptarchy"; but I think we should have to say: "For the last twenty-five years"—or, if we wanted to be more literary—"For the last quarter of a century Admiral von Tirpitz was, or had been, unceasingly engaged in the long effort to raise a High Seas Fleet for the German Empire."

Thus, in the case of Félicité we might say that for half a century the housewives, etc. On the other hand, "For half a century" is too literary a phrase to satisfy an absolutely delicate ear. Personally, if I were writing the story on these lines I should begin with an exact statement of the number of years, softening off the exactness with the qualificative "more than." "For more than thirty-seven years," I should say, and I think I should arrive at about the sense of Flaubert's phrase. I am not of course suggesting that Flaubert is at fault in the matter. "*Pendant un demi-siècle*" is a phrase in general use amongst simple people in France to imply a long period—anything between thirty-seven and fifty years.

Similarly with the word "*envièrent.*"

In English we should probably have to translate this: "Envied her her servant," and the phrase might possibly serve the turn. Nevertheless, some trace of the original meaning of the word "envy," which was a cardinal sin, still attaches to the dissyllable in certain cases. Of course in such a phrase as "I envy So-and-so his good teeth" or "his sound digestion" the original sense of the word "envy" has completely disappeared. Nevertheless the necessity to use the phrase "envied her her servant" is regrettable, though I cannot think of any more advantageous synonym. In England, I fancy, we are accustomed to associate the word "housewives" to some extent with malicious gossip, so that the collocation of the words "housewife" and

"envy" has a faint flavour of "disagreeable." In France when a *bourgeoise* of Pont-l'Évêque met Mme Aubain in the market-place or came once a week to the *salle* of Mme Aubain to play floral loto she would felicitate Mme Aubain upon Félicité and would really mean what she said. This is the precise meaning of the word "*envièrent*."

So that if I had to translate *Un Cœur simple* for publication, which God forbid that I should have to do, I should work out from the story as nearly as possible how many years Félicité was in the service of Mme Aubain and I should begin: "For more than forty years the housekeepers of Pont-l'Évêque envied Mme Aubain because of her servant Félicité." I am aware of the objections to this rendering. In the first place many reviewers might—and with some justice—object to the rendering "For more than forty years," and I do not know whether they would be right or whether they would be wrong. Still, I have the rather strong feeling that the business of a translator is to take over rather the atmosphere than the exact wording of the original. For "housewife" it will be observed that I have substituted "housekeeper," and the word "housekeeper" generally implies a paid upper servant. That I should have to chance. I have got to imply that the persons who envied Mme Aubain were in a position to keep servants; "housewife" is a dangerous word because, in its proper pronunciation of "hussif," it sounds too

like "hussy" to go near the word "envied." After the word "envied" I have inserted the words "because of," so as still to get away from the implication of mortal sin. For it seems to me that if I say "I envy So-and-so his position," that might mean that I was attempting to get him out of his job, and to obtain it for myself; whereas if I say that I envy him because of his position, it would at the most imply that I should like to have a similar one.

The reader will say: "What is the use of all this fuss about the exact incidence of a few commonplace words?" I can only answer that the exact use of words seems to me the most important thing in the world. We are, in the end, governed so much more by words than by deeds.

And I do stoutly maintain that this very exact examination and weighing of French words is of the most enormous importance to the inhabitants of these islands. It is of enormous importance to us to realise that they have in France these faithful servants, these market-towns where the housekeepers really go to market, these quiet, simple people contented with their humble and useful careers. If you will read with great care and assimilate with a humble intelligence—for humility is necessary in approaching the study of words, and your mind must be utterly cleared of any trace of preconception—if, then, with humility and attention you will read the following

sentences you will know more of France than if you spend months and months in one of the large hotels near the Tuileries Garden.

"Un vestibule étroit séparait la cuisine de la salle où Mme Aubain se tenait tout le long du jour, assise près de la croisée dans un fauteuil de paille. Contre le lambris, peint en blanc, s'alignaient huit chaises d'acajou. Un vieux piano supportait, sous un baromètre, un tas pyramidal de boîtes et de cartons. Deux bergères de tapisserie flanquaient la cheminée en marbre jaune et de style Louis XV. La pendule, au milieu, représentait un temple de Vesta; et tout l'appartement sentait un peu le moisi, car le plancher était plus bas que le jardin."

You will know, then, something of France, for France is "la salle de Mme Aubain," where she sits day after day against the white wainscoting; there will be the eight mahogany chairs, an old piano under a barometer; an arm-chair with a tapestry back will be on each side of the yellow marble mantelpiece, Louis XV in style. The clock in the centre of the mantelpiece will represent a temple of Vesta, and all the room will smell a little of mould because the floor is lower than the garden. And when you have this picture well before you, you will find that there will rise in your mind the reasonably correlated idea that there must be thousands and thousands of such houses all over France, from Alsace to the mouth of the Rhône—thousands and thousands of tranquil, useful households, where there is a touch

of style in the tapestried arm-chairs, the yellow mantelpiece, Louis XV in tradition, the clock and barometer—where, in fact, life is quite decorous, sober and more tenacious than the life of any other country in the world. Out of such small material indeed, and managing life with such frugality, these people achieve an existence of dignity and common sense. And that should be a great lesson to us.

It is a lesson that we immensely need, and that only France can give us.

Modern life, the modern life of our great cities, has got hideously too far from the quiet rooms where sit the mothers of the race—the quiet rooms that smell faintly of mould because they are a little below the level of the garden.

The salvation of the world, if it is to be saved, will come from Mme Aubain and her servant Félicité—the moral as much as, or even more than, the material salvation. And, for my part, if I could have my way, I would introduce a conscription of the French language into the Anglo-Saxon country and a conscription of the English language into France, so that every soul from the Golden Gate to the Alpes-Maritimes was transfused with the double civilisation. For it is only through language that comprehension and union can arise, and it is only by the careful and strained attention to the fine shades of language in common use that comprehension of language can be reached. And it is perhaps only Flaubert who ever paid sufficient attention even to the French

language to reach its thorough understanding, and thus to appreciate the value to the world of the mind of Félicité, who for more than forty years was the servant of Mme Aubain of Pont-l'Évêque.

The women of Kent say to their daughters, when advising them as to matrimonial policies or relations with persons of the opposite sex: "You see yon man. He comes from Sussex. He sucked in silliness with his mother's milk, and he's been silly ever since. But never you trust a man from the Sheeres." In that way do the men of Kent acknowledge that the inhabitants of Sussex are human beings, or at least not foreigners like the inhabitants of the Shires. In Kent it is always a man from the "Shires" who is the villain of the piece. When Farmer Finn wished to level Aldington Knoll—a local sacrilege, since Aldington Knoll is watched and tended by the souls of the drowned let out of hell for the purpose that it may continue to be a landmark to mariners for ever—Farmer Finn had to fetch a man from the "Sheeres." But the end of that man was a very bad one, and Aldington Knoll is there to this day. Sussex, on the other hand, is proud of the Anglo-Saxon fact that her emblem is a hog and her motto "Wunt be druv." Nevertheless, the alliance between the Men of Kent and the Men of Sussex is very close. Between Hampshire and Sussex there is little contact; between Sussex and Kent there are no boundaries. The

Weald melts slowly from the one county into the other, and where precisely the Romney Marsh and Denge Marsh melt into Gulland Marsh and Pett Level I have never been able to discover, though I have been along those roads countless times since I was eight. But there, at any rate, is the homogeneity of the two counties, with the curious survivals of primeval laws, Borough English, Gavelkind, Tail Female and the rest. As the famous song has it :

When Harold was invaded
And, falling, lost his crown,
And Norman William waded
Through Blood to pull him down,
The countries round, in fear profound,
To hide their grave condition,
Their lands to save they homage gave,
Bold Kent made no submission.

Chorus

Then sing in praise of Men of Kent,
Both loyal, brave and free ;
If any Briton doth excel,
A Man of Kent is he—

which, roared to the accompaniment of Kentish fire, have given many men to the " Buffs." And the Buffs from the immemorial claim their place in the vanguard of the British hosts.

These things are historic and incontrovertible. The Conqueror never did conquer Kent ; the ancient laws are alive to this day to testify to it ; therefore deny it not. But, all the same, I am

inclined to see the reason for the pre-eminence of Kent and the secondary eminence of Sussex in a certain cosmopolitanism. The "Sheeres" are just the "Sheeres"; the battles of Edgehill and Naseby and Tewkesbury and Marston Moor were affairs of inland clans rising against inland clans. But when Cæsar landed near Deal; Agricola at the Portus Lemanis, now known as Lympne; Augustine at Sandwich; William the Conqueror at Pevensey; when the Dutch Anabaptists landed at Rye; the Huguenots, who still live at Canterbury, at Sandwich; when all the mysterious businesses of owling, smuggling the underground passages for Jesuits, Jacobites, refugees, supporters of Napoleon, exporters of British gold to the camp at Boulogne and so on took place between the North Foreland and Beachy Head—all these things gave a certain cosmopolitan flavour to the lives of the barons of the Cinque Ports and their uproarious descendants. Their names bear witness to it to this day: there are the Venesses, the Gassons, the Odinots, the Rangsleys and the Finns, side by side with the innumerable Hogbens, the Hucksteps, the Fletchers and the Foords—Venetians, Normans, Huguenots, Dutch and Spanish all living side by side with the pure Anglo-Saxons. And right away up till the time of Napoleon, up till the time when, in the 'forties, the Rangsley Gang was dispersed, and indeed up till the present day, the inhabitants of these coasts were more familiar with the streets of Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe and

Havre de Grâce than with the gold-paved ways of London City. All these owlers, coggers, smugglers, coiners, protectors of escaping French officiers, of Jesuits, and of Jacobites, made their constant trips to those French towns, frisked it with the girls there, spoke a passable, maritime French, and no doubt had a wife in every port. Indeed, a few years ago I came across a party of lookers, waggoners and waggoners' mates from the neighbourhood of Elham who had just come back from spending a day and a night in Calais, though not one of them had ever spent an hour in London town or north of the Medway.

For me, the finest view in the world is to be had from one of those Kentish localities that I have just named. And it is for me the finest view in the world, though I have seen the Camargue from Les Baux, the Seven Hills from a height in Rome, and the Hudson from the West Point—because from that place in Kent one can best see into France. Nay, in that place one may be actually illuminated—from France ; I have really, that is to say, succeeded in reading a large-print book on those shores of Kent at night, by the flashes from Grisnez. The light-keepers at Dungeness indeed grumble at the superior brilliancy coming from the tower over near Étaples, as if it were a boast flung in the teeth of Trinity House.

Once I was breaking a window through the wall of a cottage on one of those Kentish flanks

than run down to Dungeness Bay. I suppose when one is really engrossed in a job one does not look up; and knocking a square through plaster, brickwork and tiles laid on to brickwork is a sufficiently engrossing job, though one have the handiest of handy men to help one. At any rate, it was not until we had well squared out the space into which the window-frame would go that I stepped back into the room, much as an artist steps back from his canvas, to consider what might be the view that we had opened up. The room was lowish, coolish and rather dark; the day was astonishingly bright. It was one of those days when the sun diffuses an almost painful light from a blue sky that is like polished metal, whilst underneath it ran a cruel east wind. And suddenly, in a square before the eye hung a most astonishing picture—a belt of painfully vivid blue, a belt of painfully vivid pink, and above the pink another belt of blue. And, in the belt of pink, which was formed by the French cliffs, there were nacrous markings, for all the world like the little ruddled and bluish shadowings of pink mother-of-pearl—they were the Cathedral of Boulogne, and the column that Napoleon I erected to commemorate the invasion of Great Britain. It was a curious concatenation that the breaking of the window should coincide with the so exceedingly bright day; in the thirty years or so precedent to that moment—in the thirty years when the aspect of the French shore, like a faint, pinkish fragment of mother-of-pearl, had been

almost the most familiar object of my life, I had never seen that view so clearly, and I never expect so to see it again. Nevertheless, times in which France, as it were, seems to come into England are not unchronicled in history. Thus, by what was no doubt the effect of a mirage, Boulogne was once, in 1873, so plainly visible from Hastings that the people lounging on the quay where the boats came in were quite plainly to be made out by the naked eye; and if, in those parts of the world, France sometimes seems to leap forward, in that part of the world too Great Britain almost literally seems to stretch out her hands to France; since, by the constant accretion of pebbles which are borne eastward from Kynance Cove and Chesil Beach, Dungeness Point moves out to sea and towards France at exactly the rate of a yard per year.

I remember when I was quite a small boy at school at Folkestone there were tremendous red sunsets, connected with the eruption of Krakatoa I think. To walk along the Leas in the evening was like walking up against an orange wall. Not only the sky was orange, but the sea, the house-fronts and the very beach-paths upon which one walked. Nevertheless, subdividing this flat pressure of colour there would be a long, dusky, purple streak, from the one end of which there came at first a pin-prick and then once more a great blaze of light as Grisnez swung on its axis. That, again, was France.

And, indeed, for me that strip of colour, set

midway in the skies, always suggested a fragment of the rind of pomegranate. If I could tear it away ; if I could come in behind it, there, beneath my eyes, closely packed as the pomegranate grains lie side by side, would be all the glories of France. They would begin with a little chap, wearing red worsted breeches, a blue coat with brass buttons, and a flapped cap, standing with fixed bayonet at the head of the quay, and they would go on right down to the terrace at Avignon, from which one looks out to see the great stretches and long sandbanks of the Rhône and the immense peak of the Mont-Ventoux with the observatory up amongst its snows. And when we had done gazing at that view we should return to the café in that place de la Mairie and should drink very weak and tepid beer in the shadows of the Palace of the Popes. And, broken in half, across the great stream would stand the bridge of Avignon, where, as you know, "*tout le monde danse en rond*," and which, as you know, was erected owing to the miraculous stone-lifting feats of a little boy, who, because he so encouraged the disheartened bridge-builders, was afterwards canonised.

I do not know whether you have ever watched a colony of lizards living upon a perpendicular, rough white wall, over-topping which there will be three enormous stone-pines, pouring over which there will be branches bearing thickly young peach-blossoms, and behind the peach-blossoms the bright green shutters, the very white walls,

and the very red peaked roof of a very little "*château de campagne*." And over the whole there will be the absolutely translucent, hyacinthine bowl of the sky; and, absolutely occupying every possible attention of the ear, there will be the sounds of the great mistral.

The mistral is a wind more tremendous, and more overwhelming, a wind more endowed with personality than any other wind in the globe. We say a north-west wind; we say a north-easter; but the mistral is always the mistral, constant in its effects and directions, enormous in its achievements, making life possible by its results, since to face it is like having wine forced into your limbs by a nine-million-horse-power hose. The sirocco is a parched nuisance; the föhn a miasmic breath from an open oven; the mistral is pain, exhilaration and the vastest concert of wind-instruments in the world. In its voice as it rushes a hundred feet above the earth there is the scream from the dark green tops of the stone-pines, and the wild creaking of the bright red limbs; twenty feet below that is the steady, enormous roar from the gigantic primeval plane trees; twenty feet below that the settled hiss through the dark leaves of the holm-oaks; and, crepitating perpetually in millions and millions of little sounds, the beat of leaf upon leaf in the gardens of olives. The emblem indeed of the proud City of Avignon is a mediæval head with wild hair blown straight back from the forehead and face, since Avignon is the city

of the mistral. Nevertheless, in this immense, steady tumult, upon the perpendicular white wall lizards, in the absolute tranquillity and sunlight of the hollowed-out and sunken ways, pursue their domesticities.

If you are of a contemplative disposition, or if you find a sheltered spot in a sunken way, and treasure it up as a place where you may have the full warmth of the sun and shelter from the mistral; and if in this place you will stop still for quite a time, you will perceive the lizard in his domestic aspect. The whole colony of him will creep out of the blue shadows and tiny crannies; in the immensely bright sunlight, on the dead white wall, there will be nothing of brightness about him and no metallic light; he will be dusty grey, like the under-side of the leaves on the trees in the gardens of olives. He will be, as it were, in his smoking-cap and slippers, having put off the shining armour of the full-dress parade; or perhaps the greyness is only his fatigue uniform; he will be going about his work, the work which renders him a benefactor to the world—his employment which consists, if not in "swotting," then at least in consuming—flies. In the particular place which I have in mind I have counted ninety-two lizards on a very small piece of wall, and, going there day after day to get out of the wind, we became extremely familiar with that family. There was the very large old gentleman, without a tail, and extremely grotesque because he hadn't got a tail. There was the young lady

with only one eye. Nevertheless, her other eye with its golden rim could express extreme satisfaction whenever a large fly was—no doubt agreeably—agitating various regions of her gentle interior ; there was the little lizard with the large white patch on the place where it would sit down. And there were the eighty-nine other members of the family. There, hour in and hour out, suspended on the perpendicular white surface, they would hang, grey and protectively resembling the crannies of the wall itself ; drinking in too, no doubt, the wonderful sunlight of Provence.

If we went a little farther, round the corner, we should see what we took to be the white cascade, nine or ten miles away, but very clear in the clear atmosphere. Myriads of little sunken paths amidst the immense tufts of rosemary, between the sad, grey trunks of those trees that witnessed the agony of a god—the myriads of little, sunken, stony paths all lead upwards to the little hills of grey, bare stone. Here once pastured the " chèvre de M. Seguin—la cabro de moussu Seguin que se battégue touto la neui emé lou loup e piei lou matin lou loup la mangé "—that little goat of M. Seguin, who fought all night against the wolf, and then in the morning the wolf ate her. For in the little old Alpilles with their tufts of rosemary, wild lavender and wild thyme, which the truant goats too much love, there are said still to be wolves that come out when the cold shadows fall. But up on the great

bare expanse of stone, suddenly and surprisingly, there rises the Roman triumphal arch which undoubtedly commemorates the victory of Caius Marius over the barbarians; and the other great Roman monument which the peasants in the field around, with that truer knowledge of inspired truth than is possessed by all us archæologians, will tell you was set up to commemorate the wedding-day of the said Caius Marius and St Mary Magdalene. At any rate, from this great Roman Campus Martius, set on the bare sides of the most beautiful hills in the world, once more we could always see, clearly defined, that white cascade. But if we asked the peasants ploughing between the olive trees or the stone-masons squaring out the great blocks that they got from the thirty miles of subterranean quarries left by the Romans, they would never tell us what that white cascade was. Yet it was striking enough. Nine or ten miles away, against the light grey of that range of stone hills, it seemed to stand out perfectly white, quite clear, and rather square. And, down in the town where the planes go all round the ramparts, and where there are little cafés and several old churches, and, no doubt, less of the superstition that will not let the peasants mention the works of the good people—down in the town they would say: "C'est quelque chose —quelque château." And after persistent questioning—for I don't know whether the townspeople were simply indifferent to that particular glory of France or whether they also

disliked talking about it—we elicited the definite statement that it was the Château d'Amour. You understand it was really and truly the authentic Château d'Amour—the castle where the Courts of Love were held. For myself it has a particular memory because—and this the true truth, not a fairy tale !—there I caught the scorpion that for many months I cherished in my bosom only to see it die, at a congress of historians, at sight of Professor Oncken.

Being exactly midway between the immense Castle of Les Baux and the Cities of Avignon and Arles, the Château d'Amour was the most convenient meeting-place for the knights and ladies of those times and climes who delighted to discuss problems set to them by the gentle goddess. They would spend a whole summer afternoon seated in rows in a little amphitheatre that is still discernible, discussing such points as (*a*) if a lady had a lover, was it not her duty, in true loyalty to him, to take a second lover so as to discover whether or no the first were the true perfection of perfection, or (*b*) if a gentleman's wife expired, and immediately the soul of another lady entered her body, would the knight be unfaithful to his first wife if he continued to live with the reconstituted personality ? These knights and ladies established between them what remained the most valuable tradition in the whole world—the tradition of chivalry. Bertran de Born, who loved too many ladies, and Peire Vidal, who loved

so unprofitably la Louve of Las Tours, could not only put up the finest "scraps" the world has ever seen—they could fight in the finest of spirits. If to-day we are, metaphorically speaking, "playing the game" it is due as much as anything to Bertran de Born. I do not suppose that the reader will remember the story of the siege of the Castle of Autaforte.

Bertran de Born, with his wonderful but too abusive poems, had set against him all the kings of the earth and all the nobles of Provence. The King's sons of England he had set against their father, and those princes he had set against each other—Richard the Lionheart, John without land, and the Prince who had died in Bertran's arms. So the kings of the earth and the King of England and the nobility of Provence besieged Bertran de Born in his strong Castle of Autaforte. And, because their commissariat was sadly defective, Bertran de Born sent them out food from his castle, so that between them they might make a good fight of it. Eventually they battered down his walls with stone shot, took him prisoner and prepared to hang him. Bertran protested that, in the first place, the use of shot was contrary to the conventions of knightly war; and that the friends whom he had fed had very discourteously pointed out a spot in his castle wall that had not been repaired; and that, contrary to all decency, the allies had turned their balls upon this spot. He also remarked that he intended to go to Aragon upon

his good horse, and that there, with his battle-axe, he would batter in the skull of the King of Aragon, so that his brains, like paste, should run down all over his armour. The allies replied that the knights, friends of Bertran de Born, who had fed on the bread and beef that he had sent out, had had no hand in pointing out the weak place of Autaforte, but that, conformably with the rules of war and the dictates of humanity, their master of artillery had discovered that weak place for himself. They also said that Bertran de Born was very unlikely to batter in the skull of the King of Aragon since they were going to hang him in ten minutes. But Bertran replied to the King of England so movingly with tidings of the King's son who had died in his arms that the King of England, beneath his tent, with the tears running down his face, set free the great maker of *sirventeses* and gave him his life, his castle, much gold and many gentle and pitiful compliments.

At any rate, one day we penetrated, pushing our way through briars and wild olives, into the Castle of Love that, for many centuries, no lovers had penetrated. In amongst these frowning heights we found rubbles of old walls, of Roman pottery, of Saracenic glass and of mosaic work of the troubadours—and the poor scorpion. This engaging, innocuous and affectionate animal survived the voyage to Nice, to Marseilles, to Corsica, to Paris, and even the crossing of the English Channel. But alas! this was before the war.

I happened to take it to that fatal congress of historians, and the historians, coming mostly from the east of the Elbe, when they heard of the historic origins of its birthplace, were, Teutonically, wild to see it. They thought perhaps that the real name of Bertran de Born, since he had a red beard, was Bernstein von Bornhofen.

All chivalry, then, all learning, all the divine things of life came from that triangle of the world which holds the Château d'Amour, midway between Les Baux, Arles and Avignon. From there they spread up the Rhône, across the Île de France; across the Pas-de-Calais, to the port of London, to Oxford, to Edinburgh, to Dublin, to, say, Philadelphia, and a little way across the Rhine. The races affected by that Romance culture are all one race. That is the true truth of history, for all these races see God and the great archangels and the little angels of God, with much the same vision from much the same angle. For races outside that circle, God is Wodin, or the Machine, or Sad Necessity.

Not all of us are loyal servants, but in the lands of this comity there is still some loyalty; not all of us are chivalrous, but in the lands of this comity there is some chivalry; not all of us are poets, but in the lands of this comity the mouthing of verbiage at least does not quite obscure truth. So, if in the world from now on there is to be any of the pleasantness that we loved, any of the virtues that we have held made men and women gracious, the civilisation of France, which stands

between those frugal Mediterranean quietudes and our Nordic appetites, must preserve itself. If it does not, there may well be in the world many more machines, many more gilded hotels —but assuredly there will be none of that civilisation of altruism and chivalry which, beginning in that triangle of Provence, has spread pleasantness and light upon the minds of men to the farthest confines of the earth.

CHAPTER II

RIVE GAUCHE

The Left Bank has seemed to me for as long as I can remember one of the vastest regions in the world. Always. When I was a boy and lived mostly, as far as Paris was concerned, in the Quartier de l'Étoile, there were five Quarters of the World. They were Europe, Asia, Africa, the Romney Marsh and the Left Bank. To-day for me civilisation consists in the Left Bank, Asia, Africa. The Romney Marsh is no doubt still in its place.

In my hot youth I disliked Paris. She was stony and infested with winds—I suppose because it was mostly in the winters that I walked about her streets. . . . Stony, windy, expensive, solitary —and contemptuous : that was Paris, and I hated her. I still hate the Quartier de l'Étoile !

I know next to nothing about architecture, but I think that, as far as the architect is concerned, it is his job, if he works in stone, not to leave his building looking stony. A building that is not a gaol or a workhouse should look as if it were warm and soft to the touch—and that dictum wipes out all Haussmannised Paris. She is never soft and she is never warm ; she is in fact only too

obviously the creation of a gentleman with a name like Haussmann working under the patronage of an Imperial Rasta like Napoleon III; she is incapable of mellowing, like the wines they offer you in all the Hotels *Splendides et de New-York* of the sleeping car world; she is as incapable of supporting life as the refrigerate meats that in those establishments they serve to you, and like them she is inhabited solely by . . . financiers.

I am talking of course of the Quartier de l'Étoile of my youth. To-day I never go there, or not more than a dozen times in a year, and then only in a hired vehicle of sorts, making for an evening drive in the Bois de Boulogne. But the straight, hateful, stony streets still run out from the Rond Point de l'Étoile like the spokes of a wheel—the avenue Victor-Hugo, the avenue Wagram and all the rest of them. . . . I except from my general malediction the avenues of the Champs Élysées and du Bois de Boulogne where I lived when a boy. They have some of the qualities and dignity of main roads: you go along them to get somewhere, even if it is only to the Lacs of a summer evening: they are so broad that, from a horse-cab in the roadway, you hardly note the unweathering stoninesses of the housefronts. Certainly you have not the feeling that you are sunk in deep, frigorific canyons inhabited solely by financiers—the feeling that broods all over the rest of that Quarter.

One may say what one likes about Napoleon

III : better men than I have seen in him a better man than most—an idealist, a dreamer of frail dreams. But certainly when, with Haussmann, he set to at the transmogrification of North-Western Paris, his frail dream of that day was a lasting prophecy. Not only did he find it brick and leave it machine-sawed stone but he built *the* home for the worst of all international ruling classes : a home for the rulers of to-day. . . . Or perhaps it would be better to leave out the adjectives. The world has seen a good many bad men, if never so many built to one pattern.

Anyhow, driving along those last avenues one does not seem to notice that, to-day, they have much changed, either as to surfaces or as to populations : only the financiers on the sidewalks seem leaner and less florid ; less Levantine, more American. And indeed the Levantine bucket-shopkeeper has been largely replaced by the Confidence Trick man of one type or the other The world progresses. But change indeed has come in the view that, from one's one-horse fiacre, one has—that one finds suddenly that one has—of the Rive Gauche. It remains geographically the same : you feel it to be there, over your left shoulder—but the mental image has how much altered !

When I was a boy the Left Bank was a yellow-purplish haze : to-day it is a vast sandy desert, like the Sahara. But immense ! More immense than Europe, more immense than even Australia which, Australians tell me, is the largest continent

in the world. . . . Why I should have those two images I hardly know. Perhaps because in my boyhood the left bank was a distant city indeed, and from distant cities one sees at night, in the sky a yellow-purplish glow; or perhaps because, now that I know the Left Bank better than any other portion of the surface of the globe, I have realised how minutely little one can know even of one street inhabited at all thickly by human beings. Or perhaps still more because I should find it less fatiguing to take the train from Paris to Constantinople than, at half past six in the evening when it is impossible to get a place in an omnibus or in any other type of vehicle, to have to walk, say, up the rue du Bac from the Seine, along the Boulevard St Germain, past St Sulpice and so to anywhere on the Boulevard du Montparnasse . . . I am talking of course only of half past six when the spirits are low and vehicles unprocurable. I have as a matter of fact frequently walked quite buoyantly from the Île St Louis to the Observatory and beyond at a time of day when taxicabs were plenty. But the impression of infinitely long walks with the legs feeling as if you dragged each step out of sands remains.

And the place is, upon the whole, perfection!

There is here no stoniness: heaven knows what the houses are made of, but, never having been cleaned or re-painted since 1792, they all have so rich a patina that you may well think they were originally constructed of patina alone—of the very Dust of Ages. And the streets are all so

narrow and crooked that no winds have entered them ever. Not even into the rue de Quatre-Vents does the breath of heaven penetrate . . . or into the rue du Cherche-Midi! Austere, frugal, still, greyish: here indeed is the region of Pure Thought and of the Arts!

It is of course a region of a great many other things—of the noisy incomprehensibilities of the Palais Bourbon as of the more massed movements of the Senate in its Palace of the Luxembourg: of the constantly growing fringe of internationalisms and of cafés more alcoholic by far than were the cafés of my youth when one ordered a *café au lait* (or *mazagran*) and mused over it for a whole evening at a cost of four sous and a sou to the waiter. Alas, to-day even in the most austere establishments of the Latin Quarter proper a *café au lait* is called *à la crème*—and the *crème*, quite often, late of an evening will be condensed milk. It will cost you fifteen sous!

Nevertheless the real Latin Quarter does maintain its austerities: they still, for instance, there serve you with orange flower water with your infusion of lime flowers though few students to-day know what to do with it. Still, in the more ancient cafés reputable women are not seen before nine of an evening—because reputable women put their children to bed and see to the dinners of their professor-husbands before seeking a frugal respite, and still the students of the Sorbonne, in conclave and riotous, are strong enough to make a government fall if they dislike

a ministerially appointed professor or suspect infringements of their privileges. Yes, they will mob a Minister of Education sitting in front of the Café du Panthéon and he will only get away under the protection of gendarmes and pompiers—with the loss of his hat. . . .

So that, in the end, the region that surrounds the Sorbonne is the living heart of the South Side—perhaps of France, perhaps still more of the world. For France has several famous universities: the world has only one Latin Quarter.

It is not only that this Quarter contains the Sorbonne, or even the Sorbonne plus the Beaux Arts: it is that these two institutions attract an infinite number of youths seriously intent on absorbing Pure Thought on authorised and academic lines and, much more important still, an infinite number of youths who react instinctively against Pure Thought and the Arts as enjoined by authorised and academic teachers. The Sorbonne and the Beaux Arts are minatory institutions in that without their warrant you cannot make any sort of official career in France or in countries where French diplomas carry weight. If you come into hostile contact with either body your chance of an official career is gone in France or may be jeopardised in your own land: so, if you take sides with the Opposition that is always to be found in the streets around the Pantheon, your unorthodoxies will be the more embittered . . . and thus Thought is

promoted. In that way the Latin Quarter lives in a sense that can be advanced for none of our Anglo-Saxon Universities, they having the gift of surrounding even the most advanced thought with suavity—as you pack nitro-glycerin in coco-butter to keep it from exploding.

Around, then, this intensely living Quarter stretch infinite vastnesses of *Arrondissements* known and unknown. For the Left Bank is a great Realm in itself. Where the Boulevard du Montparnasse, running east and west, becomes the Boulevard du Port-Royal you have a huge Quarter of hospitals, clinics, dispensaries, Protestant training colleges and Institutions, a few slums, the Observatory, the ominous gaol and the Statue of the Lion of Belfort. This is the xiiith *Arrondissement* of which it is said that it is the largest of all in extent and yet the most sparsely inhabited, since the hospitals, training colleges and institutions in general have all spacious grounds and are slowly pushing out the more densely populated slum-lands.

In my hotter youth—which was a pretty cool affair!—this xiiith *Arrondissement* was reputed to be inhabited on the one hand by the fatuous and on the other hand by the criminal. The Maire was always represented as issuing proclamations of an entertaining imbecility, offering rewards for the apprehension of the malefactors who stripped the bark off the plane trees then newly planted in the Boulevard du Port-Royal, and the like. But this was also the

Quarter of the Apaches—glamorous and filled with danger, unsafe at dusk and later, to be visited only by the adventurous! I remember going in the 'nineties several times to visit an old artist who lived in the small village of studios that is still next door to the Santé prison. He had been a friend of my grandfather's in his Paris student days.

But it had been enjoined upon me by my careful guardians that I must never, never find myself South of the end of the Boulevard St Michel after dusk, for fear of the Thugs and Garotters: never indeed even in the Boulevard St Michel itself after nightfall—for fear of the allurements there. That old artist painted sedulously until dusk or almost, and would not much talk until afterwards, so, since I came in order to hear him talk of my grandfather and himself in a Latin Quarter of before even the day of Murger, Schaunard, Mimi and the rest—which he did very fascinatingly!—the shades were usually much more than crepuscular when, unobtrusively, I would slip out of the gates of that enclosed village. . . . A long boulevard, lined all the way with high, blank, very grim walls, darkened by the chestnut trees then newly planted, with very dim gas-lamps far distant one from the other. Then one evening, fifty yards behind my back, running footsteps sounded. Until they were very close I did not even quicken my pace: in the end one is English and at eighteen must be nonchalant. When they *were* very close

I ran. I ran like hell. But they gained and gained on me. And they gained. I stood at bay under a gas-lamp, beneath the black walls of the prison. They emerged from gloom—two men. They ran on.

They were Apaches all right: there were the casquettes with the visors right down over the eyes; the red woollen mufflers floated out, the jackets were skintight, the trousers ballooned out round the hips and one of them had an open jack knife. I suppose they had been in an affray lower down the boulevard. The spot was just where they guillotine such inmates of the Santé as are not there for their healths. For that too is one of the professions carried on in this highly technical Quarter. But the Apache is now extinct. He is extinct in the Avenue d'Orléans into which the Boulevard Arago prolongs itself as in the Quarter of the Gobelins, farther to the East where industrialism which has ruined the modern world fights with the applied sciences for ground-space. For even into the otherwise Utopian . . . so nearly Utopian! . . . community of the Left Bank, industrialism must needs creep, so you have tanneries, producers of chemicals, of cheap footwear, of packing cases, of cheap printing—and of course of tapestry.

Along the Avenue d'Orléans, behind cheap emporia, run the poorer quarters, as far as, and no doubt farther than, Montrouge. Here you have a population of *marchands des quatre saisons*—

costermongers—market porters, handcart proprietors, odours of cabbage leaves, an Anglo-Saxon lady artist or so, a sculptor or so, window cleaners, those who occupy themselves with graveyards, because of the proximity of the great cemetery, and small—nay tiny!—shops whose whole wares will be a peck or so of onions apiece, five or six unnamable fish or three secondhand chairs and an ormoulu presentation mantel clock. And all in among these native dwellers push, where they can find a garret, or half a garret, or a quarter, a few law—or medical—students, though the student quarters are as a rule in the grim eighteenth-century buildings on the high ground that supports, to the greater glory of Ste Geneviève, the Pantheon. Nowadays the students and the Anglo-Saxon lady artist and the sculptor or so must push in where they can, and with their tiny purse and their heroically frugal lives get some shelter from the skies. And so, emphatically—and how much more!—must the midinettes, the seamstresses, the lesser mannequins of the greater or lesser *couturières* of the Other Side—and the lesser figurantes of the theatres and cafés where they sing: all the cheerful, sensible, careful, careless, efficient populations of a Paris that, in so far as Paris is France, make France what she is.

For one is accustomed loosely to say that Paris is not France: and indeed of the Paris of the Other Side, of the Quartier de l'Étoile, of the newspapers, of the Hotels *Splendides et des États-*

Unis or *de l'Univers et du Portugal*, of the financiers and the rest, the saying is true enough or would appear to be. You get the same cosmopolitan-sordid, marble-begilded sort of thing not merely in Paris but on the Côte d'Azur, at Cairo, in Algiers, in Lausanne, in Berlin, at Brighton, in Colombo, San Francisco, Palm Beach, Buenos Aires, but, in each of these places and innumerably more, as a fringe merely. But regarded in the Rive Gauche, Paris is infinitely more French than ever so much of France. For you get here, concentrated, the efficiency, the personal dignity, the regard for the *métier*, the seriousness, the frugality and the *terre à terre*, cheerful, usable philosophy that account for the fact that only in France can a Paris of the Other Side be a very extended affair. The point is one to be laboured and re-laboured, for here is the whole history and moral of France. I have pointed out elsewhere, but I will repeat myself: women from all over the world buy their hats in Paris not merely for the chic of the design, but because the extreme care of the seamstresses of the Rive Gauche gets an exactness of line and ensures that that exactness of line will be commensurate with the life of the hat—or at any rate of the fashion. If, that is to say, you buy a hat in London or New York or in Frankfort or anywhere else, except possibly in Vienna, you may get something that you can just wear, but it will lose its exactness of line after you have worn it twice.

As with women's hats, so with Thought and the Arts. The thought and the arts of France pervade the world—because the Rive Gauche is France.

In the centre of its realm lie the gardens of the Luxembourg, and the difference between the Luxembourg Gardens and Kensington Gardens or Central Park, New York is the difference between French and our Anglo-Saxon thought. We Anglo-Saxons believe in letting NATURE alone in dreary stretches of damp turf beneath the depressed trees of cities whose air is full of coal smoke. So, in the centre of our cities we get an exhausted—a sterilised—ghost-imitation of the country that can, at most, make the heart ache. The French are more brave and, facing problems more, more exact. Their open spaces are town-open spaces, devoted to enhancing the suavities of the civilised and to the greater well-being of children. So there is no day on which a child may not be abroad on the ordered gravel of the Luxembourg, but the days are few indeed on which a child can play on the grass in Regent's Park. The French—the Cosmopolitan!—child, on any 31st of December can, between showers, go into the the walks round the fountain that is sheltered from the north wind by the palace, and a kindly attendant will deposit near it a little heap of sand and pebbles. In this you, the child, will incontinently grub with your spade and pail. There will approach you, be-caped and mournful, a Gardien—some sort of Policeman!

Slowly and distinctly he will pronounce to you the words: "Ça, c'est défendu! . . . Dé . . . fen . . . *du*! . . . For . . . bidden!" You will go on grubbing in your sand heap. He will repeat the words to your parent or guardian, a little more hopefully. One day perhaps he will find someone to attend to him! Your parent or guardian will completely ignore him. (I have done it scores of times!) The agent of the law will continue to regard you mournfully for a long time, will then shrug his shoulders and, with sad dignity, approach another child squatting over another gravel heap. . . . Thus you will learn the one lesson that laws are made only for those that choose to keep them and the other . . . that France exists for the child!

Returning, you the child, to your lunch you will perceive the statues of Jeanne d'Albrecht in plaster, of the Comic Muse in bronze, nude and on one leg, of George Sand, of Flaubert, of Delacroix and of the twin pharmacists who invented quinine. You will perceive the pleached trees, with not a misplaced twig, that run from the foot of the Medicis basin to the Odéon entrance; you will have noticed the very tall, trimmed, two-deckered chestnuts that run in an admirable perspective towards the Observatoire with its austere, orientalish cupolas within which presumably are the telescopes. About these things, in course of time, you will ask as, successively, at a quarter to twelve each day you are conducted back home: or, if you do not ask about them, you take them in.

So your earliest impressions will be of serenities, austerenesses of placidity, of order and perspective, of History, of Classic Lore ; of Pure Literature or Applied Science as things to be honoured. You will observe that NATURE is not the tyrant of you, monsieur the young citizen of Paris, but that trees must be kept in their places : you will observe that, in effigy at least, every—every *one* !—of the great men of France, even the most respectable and pot-bellied of celebrated physicians, has a naked, or nearly naked young lady, leaning over him, or handing him his palette, or yearning up towards him from the base of his pedestal. . . . From that you will learn what you may : possibly that greatness has its agreeable rewards. . . .

Anyhow, before you are six you will be a little man or a little woman of the French Haute Bourgeoisie and, looking up the steps beside the fountain on its high hill, meditatively, you will perceive the great dome of the Pantheon with its inscription in great gold letters. . . . And, weighing carefully, you consider whether you will go there as Pasteur, as Renan, as Puvis de Chavannes, as—a little belatedly—Hugo : or as Jaurès, or as, let us say, Marshal Pétain.

The impressions that the children dwelling near Kensington Gardens or Central Park receive first are of a different sort, so they grow up . . . well, different. For them there is not, nor ever will be, a great dome inscribed AUX GRANDS HOMMES LA PATRIE RECONNAISSANTE. On the other hand if

they lisp something childishly immature about dogs, or the heavenly powers, the saying may be printed in *Punch*. It is a different sort of immortality.

And round the Luxembourg Gardens in eighteenth-centuryish, tall, grey streets, austerely, coldly, with minds exact and exactingly poised, in tall, not too light salons, on Aubusson carpets, with tapestried, old, pale oak, be-garlanded bergères all set ranged for eternal Saturday afternoon conversations on serious subjects, live the French Haute Bourgeoisie. The professors, the senators, the doctors of law, the judges, the surgeons, the administrators of museums . . . the French, in fact.

Here and there in a nook in the great courtyards behind the houses an Anglo-Saxon lady artist and a sculptor or two will have crept in, or there will be the *atelier* of a professor of painting admired by Scandinavians of serious minds. These however in the background.

That then is the Rive Gauche as far as I am here concerned. It contains no financiers. . . .

Indeed what above all marks this blessed district is a certain exiguity in matters financial. Here, once again one may repeat the most beautiful of all phrases: There the poor dare plead! The step from the houses of the Haute Bourgeoisie round the Luxembourg Gardens to the hand-to-mouth, distinctively Montparnassian-international regions and from that to the absolute starvation of the outer fringes is indeed

but the merest step. The margin is the thinnest pie-crust. Even the professors, the surgeons, the doctors of law, the magistrates and the rest of the proud façade that France presents to the world work for honoraria as often as not that an Anglo-Saxon coal miner would despise; so do great sculptors here and painters of international fame. And, if that be the lot of the accepted, what—in heaven's name—is that of the Opposition who must wait till their thought is the Accepted Thought of to-morrow? It will hardly bear thinking of.

Yet it will just bear thinking of—because the Left Bank is the Left Bank, and there the poor dare plead, exiguity of finance being there more supportable than anywhere else. The thought of the world must be kept going and indeed will be kept going in spite of all the bankers, the bill-discounters and all the kings of finance; but the thought of the world is so exiguously rewarded that a district—a realm—in which life can be supported with some dignity and with some privacy out of the reward allotted to Thought: such a realm is a necessity for the world.

It is a matter of privacy, above all things, and that, oddly enough, the café provides . . . and France. France is often blamed for her lack of hospitality, for the difficulty which you will experience in being received into any French home as a guest. And it is indeed difficult enough. But the fact that the French home is

impenetrable does lead, in French life, to an almost complete absence, in France, of the quality that it is convenient to call swank. That is what makes France thrice blessed.

For where is the sense of pretending that you have greater means than you have if the only persons to whom you can display any exaggerated symptoms of prosperity are the dozen or so of intimates who find themselves every Sunday afternoon round your tea-table? And for your acquaintances there is the café.

This French characteristic has been often enough commented on, but the far-reaching results have been, as far as I know, rather missed, the most advantageous of all being that a poor man can mix with his intellectual equals on equal terms though they be both rich and famous. I have known, in one way and another, a great number of Frenchman very well indeed, meeting them day after day at the same café table, and never have their circumstances been in the least manifest to me. They would be mostly engaged in one or other of the arts or the learned professions—naturally most usually they were men of letters or critics. . . . And one takes it for granted that the man of letters or the critic is not rich.

These gentlemen would be quiet, serious, not noticeably well- or ill-dressed—with of course the touch more of elegance of the black satin tie order than one would find in their Anglo-Saxon confrères. They would be as a rule extremely

frugal, but when they did happen, one evening or another, to do themselves well they would do themselves extremely—impressively !—well, with a connoisseurship given to few. And there would be nothing—but absolutely nothing !—to show whether they had or hadn't—" means." Nothing.

Yet three of these gentlemen would be extremely warm men, even in England—two of them indeed being said to be two of the very rich men of France. On the other hand several of those that I had taken to be—though the subject is one as to which I seldom speculate—smarter than the others and in easier circumstances had hardly so much as a certain piece of bread for their mouths next day. There was a young man I used to know and like very much—he is now dead.

One saw him about in drawing-rooms, holding a tea-cup—sometimes even in very rich drawing-rooms of the Cosmopolitan Anglo-Saxon sort. He was rather more grey-tweedish than most French writers, but he was a very brilliant and very French poet. I met him also quite frequently at the Café des Deux Magots, and I liked him very well . . . with a real affection. So one night, after a rather late party, I put my hand under his arm and said I would walk home with him : we had been talking about something interesting and had not yet exhausted the topic. He said : " Oh, no, don't do that," offering to see me to my hotel. But I persisted : I was suffering

in those days from insomnia and wanted a long walk. He said at last : " I have not got a home . . . since last quarter day." As a matter of fact, for ten days he had not slept in a bed. That can be done in Paris where there are all-night cafés. Yet there was nothing, either in his dress or —and this above all !—in his attitude towards his fellow men, to show that he was not in perfectly easy circumstances.

On the other hand, in a provincial city, with an old hinterland and a cosmopolitan-hotel fringe on its sea-shore, I met, on the debatable fringe between the two kinds of town, an elderly, perenially very young—let us say magistrate, who honoured me with a very close friendship. Him I knew to be at least very well off, he having a private fortune in addition to a distinguished official position. In his own house, too, as these things go in France he did himself very well, his furniture being handsome, his cooking good and his wine very good indeed. He refused himself nothing in reason—again as these things go in France.

Well, with my hand under his elbow, for he was already off, faster than any imaginable, conversational express train on the subject of the French administration in the colonies, I did my best to guide him towards a modestish, medium-cosmopolitan restaurant where one lunched for twelve francs, the franc at that date standing at about fifty-six to the pound. Although he obviously resisted the direction physically, he

was talking too fast about Cochin-China to be really conscious of where we were going and I had his feet practically on the doormat of that restaurant. He started, looked at the sign over the door and exclaimed: "My God!"—for you can so pronounce the ordinarily sterilised *Mon Dieu!* of the French as to give it the full force of the British objurgation.

He went on in a sort of panic: What were we doing there? What in the world were we doing there? Had one of us gone mad?

I remarked shamefacedly that I desired to stand him a lunch in return for a great deal of hospitality I had had from him.

He regarded me with enormous eyes and wiped his pince-nez the better to look at me again. It was as if I had been something fabulous. He shrugged his shoulders in a sort of blank despair and, catching me really hard by the upper arm, went off at great speed, perfectly silent, through a great many back-streets filled with an Italianate population in high, eighteenth-centuryish houses. We arrived at a large, oldish, but not so very old, restaurant—where I usually lunched and where the lunch cost four francs seventy, wine included, and where the food was certainly as good, and in patches better, than it would have been at the other place. Here there lunched habitually people like the higher officials of the prefecture, the local judges, the doctors, the lawyers, military officers of higher rank. He fixed his elbows, when we were seated and lunch ordered, on

the table, he folded his hands one in the other and said :

" Mon bon Ford ! Expliquez donc ! "

It was no good. He accepted my desire to return his hospitality as a proper attention on my part. But, he said, *why* go to a restaurant charging two and a half times as much. *He* lunched where we then were every time he was in N—— ; I did the same. We knew the food was if anything better : the company certainly was. Well then ? We each knew the other's circumstances perfectly well : there was no question of my impressing him with my resources. I was not a fraudulent banker trying to sell him more than dubious oil-shares. The fact that we both habitually lunched in that place meant that it was the best place to eat in in that city. Well then ?

I tried to explain to him that, in England, persons of similar relationships would act as I had acted every time. The host would for that day put up the pretence that he was accustomed to spending two and a half times as much as he was really in the habit of spending ; the guest would assume the air that he was accustomed to eating in such restaurants day by day. The food might be infinitely worse than the food they were accustomed to consume at their club. . . .

My friend said that that sounded like lunacy : he supposed that it was the once celebrated English spleen. I said that nowadays we called it " swank," but that explained nothing and he

continued to say that to go to a worse restaurant and pay two and half times as much as at a better one seemed to him to be lunacy. . . .

There *are* these unbridgeable gulfs. The other day I asked a French gentleman not at all similar in type to my other friend how he would translate: "I have a thirst that I wouldn't sell for a guinea!" He grew electrified. He was a fat, jovial person, rather a bon vivant. His eyes protruded. I said: "J'ai un soif que je ne consentirais pas à vendre pour cent et quelques francs!"

He exclaimed: "Mais quoi? Questcequecest-queca? Vous devenez fou, mon vieux?"

He *couldn't* get it. He could understand paying twenty-five francs for a bottle of Hermitage and another twenty-five for one of still champagne . . . But, supposing you *could* dispose of a thirst that presumably was a big one costing fifty francs to dissipate . . . If you did not do it . . . Why it would cost you one hundred and fifty-nine francs seventy. . . . It was all very well to allege that it was only a saying. . . . That made it all the worse. . . . It meant a national point of view that was practically lunatic. . . . For what was it but lunatic? . . . Not sell? . . . Then you *rejoice* in your thirst! . . . *What* a point of view! What savagery! . . . If you have a thirst —which God forbid!—you quench it bestially with inferior vintages, or beer, or Vichy water. Gulp! But the way to *drink* . . .

The waiter brought him a half-bottle of a wine that, in mercy, I will refrain from naming and

poured out not enough nearly to fill a not at all large glass. My friend extended his palm protectively round all the wine that the glass contained, moved it with a slow, rotary movement, beneath his nose. At long last he took a single sip and replaced the glass on the table. He regarded me fixedly, at once with ecstasy and with cynicism.

"You," he said, "will take a bottle and half of this year's Beaujolais to begin with. And then say a litre of . . . What do you call it? . . . Ah, *chindigarfe!* . . . And then—not?—a pint of port. *And* liqueurs. . . ."

Yes: it is difficult to appreciate the points of view of civilisations separated by seas the one from the other. I have just taken up a guide to Paris written by an Anglo-Saxon gentleman who is said to unite to no little literary skill a very enviable popularity. He states that he has noticed with astonishment written up on a Paris wall in chalk the words: "Vivent les Femmes!" and that that *does* seem a silly sort of thing as an aspiration. For of course women will go on living. They do. You do not need to chalk it up on a wall!

Be that as it may, the poor dare plead, on the Left Bank; and that is because there our national characteristic—our *chief* national characteristic, that rhymes with Bank—meets with so cold a non-comprehension that the poor plant dies.

I was talking the other day to a French person who knows English very well. Too well. For

when I said that, as far as I was concerned, the streets round the Luxembourg were good enough she answered with a little moue and shrug : " Oh yes. Shabby genteel." But that is just what they aren't. Shabby-genteelness was an attempt to give the impression that you were of a class and of resources above those that were really yours. In the days when shabby-genteelness was common in England you wore a top-hat rendered unnaturally shiny by some patent preparation, in spite of its age ; a frockcoat rendered, in spite of its age, unnaturally *un*-shiny ; you twirled a cane that hauntingly resembled malacca —and so on. That class has vanished from England. But the streets that I champion never had that quality They must have been *born* greyish, unpainted, quiet, tall and austere. And that they remain : there is nothing architecturally suggestive of the suspiciously lustrous hat. They are the quiet streets of gently educated, gently living, secure, not over-wealthy people.

And I ask nothing better. I really ask nothing better of life than to be walking home peaceably along the rue d'Assas late at night : nothing better than the immensely long, dwindling perspective of the house-fronts and the lamps, all in parallelly dwindling perspectives of reflection shining down the roadway that is so lubricated with motor-oil and so polished with wheels that on dry, still nights it shines more than on the very wet ones.

Nothing better. . . . And yet the tranquil

satisfaction—which I can enjoy every night when I am in Paris, so inexpensive are the pleasures of this South Side !—the tranquil satisfaction is, I am aware, due not merely to the quietudes, the perspectives and the reflections : it is due to the fact that my unhastening steps are carrying me South. Out of Paris into France. Towards Provence.

CHAPTER III

THE LEFT BANK AGAIN

The Left Bank of Paris always seems to me a very tenuous affair. It is not merely that its houses seem more misty than the erections of the other side—greyer, papery even. You have nothing there white and hard and spikey—like the Sacré Cœur of Montmartre, the monstrosities that successive exhibitions leave along the poor dear Champs Élysées, the interior of the Madeleine or St Augustin, the Haussmannised Boulevards. You haven't even a vast mud pie like the Opera. And looking at it from the Other Side—from the Other Side that includes Berlin, Moscow, Great Britain and the United States, not to mention Normandy, the Pas-de-Calais and French Flanders, you might easily regard it as something so thin that it might be easily swept away. Perhaps it might: it is on the road to the Mediterranean.

So, whether you regard it from the point of view of the conquering invader, of the Ally, of the tourist, of the impressionist, of what you will amongst the million temperaments into which humanity divides itself, you are apt to think one of two things: either that France ends

with the North Bank of the Seine at Paris, or that France begins with the Quais on the Left Bank, from the Quai Voltaire to the Quai de la Tournelle—the Quais where they sell old books from boxes girded to the parapets, beneath the plane trees. For I will wager that whether you are a conquering invader of the warlike or of the mere cheque-book type, you imagine that when you have taken the Sacré Cœur, the exhibition buildings, the Opera, the Madeleine, Ciro's, the Grands Boulevards, the rues de la Paix and de Rivoli with their hotels, the rue Pigalle and the night establishments of Montmartre, you have taken all of France that matters and that the supreme guerdon of the conqueror, the French Riviera—even the Côte d'Azur!—is in your grasp; for naturally in your approach to the Moulin Rouge you will have mastered Dieppe, Tréport and the other bains de mer, not to mention Calais, Amiens, Lille, Arras, the coal pits, the factories and the rest of the industrial wealth of the nation. You will ignore alike the Massif Central, the valley of the Rhône and Mont Blanc, along with the Luxembourg Gardens, the Sorbonne and the Boulevard Montparnasse. You have all that you want.

I think it is fairly safe to say that that wedge narrowing from the Ardennes and the Channel bathing places to the Place de l'Opéra represents France for the vast majority of invaders, allies, tourists and tradespeople from whatever part of the northern and western world. Yet to others of us

France begins with the bookstalls on the Quai Malaquais and ends with Marseilles. Indeed if you added to the Left Bank, Marseilles, with Toulouse and Périgord for cookery, Dijon and the Côtes du Rhône for wines and Provence for gaiety, farces, love-making, bull-fights and, of course garlic, you would have France.

You would have a very good France—my France! There are naturally other regions, but Brittany is no more France than the Welsh are English, and I am not meaning to exclude Tourangeaux, Auvergnats, Béarnais, the inhabitants of the Cevennes, though they are mostly queer, hard, historically toughened Huguenots or else Italian immigrants—or the inhabitants of any district south of Paris. For, though my heart, I assure you, is in the right place, alas, my geography is the weakest part about me, and without maps I have not the remotest idea where any of these places are. Bismarck said that a Frenchman was a man with a great love of good cooking and no knowledge of geography. He must have meant me. Anyhow France is anywhere South and generally West of a line drawn from the cupola of the Institut to the spire of the church in the little market-place of Mentone.

One has here to introduce some sort of saving clause. Obviously the Côte d'Azur is not France, yet the cosmopolitan fringe that runs from Mentone to Antibes is so very thin that, a few streets back from the Promenade des Anglais—and by courtesy let us add the Promenade des

Americains!—at Nice the town is at once overwhelmingly native if not overwhelmingly French, and a few inches back from Cagnes and you are in pure Provence. Hyères on the other hand is inland. Or, if you like, you may counter me by saying that the district round St Étienne in the very heart of the Centre is as much a Black Country as the district in which are to be found Lille, Arras, Roubaix, Tourcoing and the other horrible places. That is true, but that is not to say that my France is a rotten apple at the heart. If you took Leeds, which is the most horrible city in the world (let me, please, be a little intolerant!), and Pittsburg, which is what it is, and set them down in the middle of the Sahara, that would not convert the desert into Anglo-Saxondom, though we should no doubt talk a great deal about spreading the blessings of civilisation.

France, in short, is still a realm in which you will find good cooking, good wines, pleasant faces, good talk about books, bustle, love-making, frugality, dignity, powers of expression, amazingly good local cheeses, brass bands, bull-fights, *crimes passionnels*, strikingly attired sportsmen with singular dogs, and neither lifts nor lounges in the hotels.

This last is a very striking characteristic of real France. A very active race, no French person resents climbing up to a sixth floor, and the hotel is used by them merely as an hotel—a place in which to sleep, a place very possibly but not

invariably in which to eat ; but no place in which either to sit about, chew gum, indulge in public siestas or write letters. If you want a siesta you retire to your bedroom and close the shutters and the windows hermetically ; if you want to sit about you go to the terrace of a café. So you do if you want to write letters, for, if you are French, you will want to be in the open air at every practicable moment of the waking day, whereas you desire to shut every aperture of the room in which you sleep—for fear of draughts. We on the other hand die if our bedroom windows are closed, but as we think it slightly indecent to eat, and positively unheard of to write letters, out of doors, we pass the greater part of our time within our four walls. It probably amounts to about the same thing in the end—but we talk much more about being an open-air race.

Really, however, these international comparisons, one sometimes thinks, are stupid things unless it is a comparison of say the inhabitants of Glasgow with those of Arabia. From where I sit writing, and for miles and miles around, there is nothing to tell me that I am not in Sussex, or Buckinghamshire—any downland country. The fields are the same ; there is about the same proportion of hedgerows and of unenclosed ploughland ; the cottage in which I sit has the same dark oak rafters and the same immense fireplace as the room in which I used to sit in Sussex ; the kitchen gardening is exactly the same and the village people are exactly—but

exactly !—the same. The sixtyish, grizzled, herculean man of all work that I used to employ in England—he could neither read nor write and had been twice to London—earned great fame among my friends by his quaint sayings. One August bank holiday—the great British national feast—we had two motor-cars and a dog-cart outside our gate. Leaning on the hedge, weightily, like Dr Johnson, Standing brought out: " Bed-hahm do get more like London every day." Not quite a week ago to-day, being the fifteenth of August, the feast of the Assumption, the *great* French national holiday, our next-door neighbour, sixtyish, grizzled, slow moving and very heavily built, stood musing by my hedge. Four midinettes, home for the week-end from Paris, passed walking arm in arm. Madame Ranvier remarked weightily : " On dirait quasiment Paris !" She can just read and, I dare say, write, but she has never been to Paris which is distant 28 kilometres —say 18 miles. She makes her living by cutting toothpicks out of poultry feathers—one franc fifty for one thousand toothpicks, the feathers being found.

But indeed, looking through a book I wrote about the south-eastern English countryside, I was just simply amazed to find how exactly everything I had written there about English " characters " could be paralleled amongst the individuals that live around me here. For the matter of that I shrewdly imagine that they could be pretty exactly matched in New England as

well. Indeed, given fairly similar climates and soils and races not too utterly dissimilar and it would be strange indeed if you did not evolve populations much resembling in their leading characteristics the one the other. And most of the country from the English Channel to Paris is really England—or if you prefer to put it the other way round, most of the country from La Manche to the South Riding of Yorkshire is really France. For few Englishmen, reading the names of certain villages as they dash, in express trains, from the sea-coast towards the reorganised Moulin Rouge but say to themselves, remembering the Black Prince, Quatre Bras, Agincourt and so on: "But this is really *our* country." And no Frenchman—for their history is known to all the French!—no Frenchman then, if he happens for a moment to consider the English Southern counties, neglects to say to himself: "But this is really French territory. It is a part of Normandy. Because of 1066."

It is that that makes the North of France down to the Seine so profoundly uninteresting. There is no sense in crossing the Channel there to find change, even if you should come from Blackpool, or Bradford, or Burnley. You will find exactly the same pleasures in Montmartre as you do in the first, exactly the same wool-factories in Roubaix as you do in the second. As for Burnley I do not quite know with what they employ themselves there—cotton or coal, or both as likely as not!—but you will find them both in the North

of France. I dare say you will also find back-to-back houses there as you do in Leeds.

These things are all very well in their way but they are no more distinctively characteristic of France than they are of industrial Pennsylvania, industrial Illinois, or Mr. Bennett's Five Towns. So that France really does begin with the bookstalls on the Quai Voltaire. Do not think that I say this because those Quais are any haunt of mine. I abhor them and pass the torpedo-grey boxes with averted eyes. If I have bought a book there six times in my life it is as much as I have done. More, probably.

For those places are cemeteries; Thought there, beneath the melancholy, untidy planes—and no planes anywhere else in the world are so lugubriously deciduous at every season of the year!—Thought there is in its shroud, and if I ever saw in one of those boxes a book of mine I should at once throw myself into the Seine. No; for me France does not begin with bookstalls, but I recognise that a Utopian realm cannot exist without its Booksellers' Row and its bibliophiles. So let them come in.

And it is curious what apparently trifling and forlorn bits of paper there find a value. The other day I saw a deeply-shawled woman of the concierge type approach a bouquiniste of the humbler sort. She held out a very small pamphlet: the merchant—he was bent nearly double and wore four mufflers—inspected it with the end of his nose. Coins passed from him to her. From her

furtive way of receiving them I imagined that she must have stolen that fascicule from lodgers in her house. The bouquiniste let me see it. It was a pamphlet advertising an English—or perhaps it was an American—patent medicine : in English. He had paid for it . . . three centimes ! I told him that no one would ever buy that. He grumbled at the ground, being too bent to look up : " *Oh, oui ! Il y a des images !* " I suppose purchasers, French or Tscheko-Slovakian, might be found who would revel in the beauty of the photographed purchasers cured by that concoction. I should have thought not, for the " *images* " were mostly of mature ladies of the washerwoman type who had been relieved of dreadful backaches. But tastes differ. . . .

Imagine however a civilisation whose concierges are sufficiently hawk-eyed to ferret such a pamphlet out of its waste-paper basket and then to walk however short a distance for the sake of three centimes ! . . . And a civilisation that will find a bibliophilic grave for such manifestations of Thought—and of course the Arts.

From there you go South. You must. You are at the Northern extremity of the civilised world : all lands more boreal are in the Arctic Circle where Thought congeals. It freezes after an exposure to the air of seven minutes. Think of the Musée du Louvre ! Or of the Grands Magasins of the same name. . . . It would take you about seven minutes to get into either of them

from the bookstalls on the Quais Voltaire or Malaquais.

You stroll—for on the South Side you never plunge—straight into the eighteenth century—the last century to be worth . . . oh, three centimes! You get right into it in the street that runs beside and then behind the Institute of France. I never know the names of streets. But this street runs into the Quai Malaquais extravagantly narrow, between high seventeenth- and eighteenth-century walls. It contrives to make one angle of about forty-five degrees with itself and then another of about thirty with the Quai. There you see the century of sedan-chairs smiling at the century of the automobile—with the smile of Voltaire! Aha! my dears, you hear it say, what do you make of *this*!

For to go in any sort of mechanically propelled vehicle on any day at all greasy down this street is something of an adventure. It really is, since for some unknown reason the drivers of all taxis and of all immense lorries have an unnatural affection for this thoroughfare where there is room for practically nothing to pass and where the two bends make it impossible to know what you are going to have to pass in the imminent future. Then the skidding and the horn-blowing and the great lorries mounting up on the half-yard of side walk and the taxis cannoning back one on to the other six deep! And the eighteenth-century houses, and the eighteenth-century furniture otherwise desolately displayed in the

old furniture shops, and the eighteenth-century prints of gentlemen with long wigs and steel armour and the eighteenth-century books in the windows of the old bookshops! All smiling! Like Voltaire!

But the drivers seem to like it, for, if they have any excuse at all they will take this street rather than, say, the rue St Jacques or the Boulevard Raspail which are straight and wide. Perhaps they too like the eighteenth century or desire to contemplate as closely as possible the Institute of France. But you—you won't like it, inside your glazed vehicle, doing its skating. Or perhaps you will!

The other day I remonstrated with a taxi driver for performing the most impossible feats with me on board. He had already parted with half a mud-guard. He apologised, but stated that twice—twice!—in the last week, careful driver as he was, he had been remonstrated with by American passengers who said they had come to Paris to have a little fun, not to drive in funerals. They had paid him liberally for the damages to his car and his police-court expense. So, having taken me for either an American or an Alsatian, he had decided that I was an American because Alsatians as a rule are economical and do not take taxis along 'bus routes—having decided that I was an American he had been anxious to oblige. I told him for heaven's sake to realise that I was not only an Alsatian but an employee of the Pompes Funèbres. It is

thus that we Anglo-Saxons corrupt the simple natives.

We corrupt them only at the extremities however. The Other Side is what it is largely because of the pound sterling and the dollar, and at the southern fringe of the Left Bank is to be found a rather dismal imitation of the Côte d'Azur—or let us say a twentieth-century Alsatia! But between these extremities, in the Latin Quarter proper, in the regions of the professoriates and of French youth, you have the incorruptible. What it is convenient to call the Professoriates are pure eighteenth century, consequently Youth is bitterly something else. That is to be expected.

But, whatever it is it is French—French enough to turn its incredibly numerous foreign inhabitants into very good Frenchmen. If you go into any of the larger cafés frequented by students—into the smaller and more intimate ones you won't so easily penetrate—you will see at the table next you a nice boy from Washington who is studying international law and polity at the Sorbonne in order to enter the United States diplomatic service. Like all nice French boys of to-day he will look more like any Harrow-and-Oxford boy than any Harrow-and-Oxford boy ever looked and his outlook on life will be extraordinarily that of the Sorbonne. Talking to him there will be a little, blinking, smiling Siamese who is studying medicine in Paris. His face will be that of a blinking bat but his attire and air will be French in an astonishing

degree. . . . And you will see your café to be filled—but filled!—with foreign students of every possible and unlikely race; there will be Finns, Tscheko-Slovakians, Hungarians, Irish—English even, and Americans. . . . But so strong will the French influence be that it will appear a French crowd to a degree that was never the case in my young days, when if we were English we tried to be as English as possible or if we were Scots we exaggerated our Scotticisms to the point of wearing Glengarry caps. You could not do it to-day.

The French soul—and particularly the young French soul—is passing through a period of agony that makes it say very definitely: "He that is not for us is against us"—and that makes it give no quarter to him that is not very markedly for them! I do not mean to say that a foreign student of anti-French tendencies would be personally mishandled; but he would find himself in an atmosphere of such bitterness, or at least of such want of cordiality, that he would not very long stay to bear it. He would go.

Nor do I mean to say that the bitterness of the French young is in any sense national, much less Chauvinist. It is, on the contrary, a bitterness of pure bewilderment. Except that there is a strong current away from what it is convenient to call eighteenth-centuryism, there is no strong current amongst the French young of to-day and, were I to have to put a name to any French movement that at all predominated amongst

the Jeunes of the Latin Quarter, I just could not, though for a long period I have been receiving most of the books and periodicals published by those very Jeunes. But I can perceive no general direction in it all.

The violent outburst of hatred that saluted Anatole France on his deathbed and accompanied his funeral was pretty well shared in by all the Young of Paris, and did not confine itself to any section, though one section was naturally the most vociferous as another was more pensive; and so on. The violent and physically dangerous pacifist party were just as incensed against the author of the Bergeret series as were the royalists; and most violent of all were what I must call the Centre Party of Les Jeunes.

The reason is at hand.

Anatole France, going to his grave with Republican honours, was to the Young a hideous figure; the honours bestowed upon him a menace to the world. He stood for scepticism such as was born in tranquil and be-statued gardens a little before the French Revolution; but he stood also for laziness, for indifference, for, even, wealth! Voltaire dying to-day would be hated, but not *so* hated, for he was at least an active figure. And Jaurès, though he stood pretty well for what Anatole France in his later years in a dilettante fashion supported—Jaurès, going to the Pantheon, was on the whole pretty well regarded by most parties as a proper person for a national inhumation. It was, I mean, on the

whole felt even by the Right, all except the very extreme Right that, it being inevitable that the Pantheon should be used for political purposes, Jaurès was a very proper person to be there reinterred. France was different.

He represented a school of French thought that we, the outside world, consider to stand for France, but that is now, if not gone for ever, at any rate submerged beneath desperate waves. If only he had died a little less opulently, with a little less complacency, if only there had been fewer telegrams and if the telegrams had been a little less descriptive and international! But—it was no doubt not the fault of the Master himself—if he had been Louis Quatorze himself going protractedly off the stage no more could have been made of that passing, and he passed amidst a blaze of shuddering hatred that surpassed anything that was given to Louis Seize at his death—or even to Marie Antoinette. For indeed those who hated, shuddered.

They shuddered because of all those opulencies of every sort that were displayed in the faces of their own starvations and of those of their comrades. And the worldwideness of it seemed to make it the more appalling. Here was the Universe, muddledly thinking that thus it honoured the French spirit, conferring an apotheosis on a spirit for which at any rate the Young of the French nation had no use at all. For Young France, schooled either amidst the unspeakable horrors of the late struggle or half starving during

that period, has swept from its slate everything that had to do with the pre-war period. It has done with everything—with Greatness! with Glory! with Criticism! with Clarity of Thought! with descriptive passages in prose, with well-made sentences, with Flaubert, Renan, Taine; with every painter who ever painted, except Ingres, ironically enough; with all political systems; with all cults. Yet, unlike the Russians who were young when Turgenev was old, there is nothing Nihilist about these young men. They desperately desire to be constructive. Only they have not yet settled what it is that they want to construct.

The thing that is for me most unrealisable is the Fate that has overtaken what, in my young days, used to be the solid, austere and serious Right—the Royalist-Orleanist-Imperialist-Catholic groups. Nowadays all the solid, austere and serious populations of France are solidly, austerely and seriously upholding—the Third Republic! And it is nearly as bad form to say anything against the Republic in quiet circles of people with means as it would be in England to say anything against the occupant of the Throne or in the United States to blacken the occupier of the White House. It is, practically, exactly that. Exaggerated loyalty you won't find in France any more than in Anglo-Saxondom, but amongst what I convenience myself by calling the Haute Bourgeoisie, agnostic, measured in its enthusiasms as in its doubts, you will find accepted

as an axiom rather than as any matter of strong feeling the idea that the Third Republic represents the settled will of the People—at any rate of such portions of the People as occupy themselves with forms of government.

In my young days a shudder went through such people as I knew, who were all of the Right, the Faubourg St Germain secluding itself rigidly behind its high walls, when the Duchess of —— paid a call on the wife of the President of the French Republic. That would be in the early 'nineties of last century. Nowadays it would cause a rather disagreeable feeling if the wife of a French President called on an authentic duchess. Yet the change has taken only thirty years to work.

Such a case is not unparalleled in history. In 1715 the Old Pretender, if he had been in the least an attractive personality, would have had a very good sporting chance of ascending the Throne with the assent of the whole solid and serious aristocracy and middle classes: thirty years later his son found hardly a single supporter amongst even the English Tories, and the solid middle classes having gone solid over to the House of Hanover, the Young Pretender must content himself with the support of a rabble of adventurers, savages, cattle-thieves — and Romantics!

Any Pretender to the throne of France to-day must content himself with a similar following.

I am making merely a constatation, a diagnosis;

not advocating any politics of my own. I have always been contentedly and unobtrusively inclined to the extreme Right in political matters, but as I have never considered myself sufficiently intelligent to interfere in the internal politics of my own country it may be taken as at any rate unlikely that I should want to take sides in the politics of a country not my own. And indeed, French politics are as complete a matter of indifference to me as they are to the average Frenchman of about my age.

For when I say that the Haute Bourgeoisie support the Third Republic I do not mean to say that they enthusiastically back any one political party, merely that they would austerely and coldly turn down any attempt to change the form of government in the direction of either Legitimism, advanced State Socialism, or of course of Communism. And their attitude towards the whole of Life is, naturally, much the same. If, in their circles, you should mention that you have your children brought up as Catholics you will be listened to with a sort of queer—not hostility, but almost unbelief. . . . As if in an English club I should avow that I always ate mustard with mutton.

And if in similar circles I should avow that the French Army has always had for me an aspect of something sacred, not in the sense that the British Army has for me an aspect of something sacred for its efficiency, its solidarity, its construction on a sound basis of psychology, so that it has always

seemed to me to be one of the two only satisfactory Institutions in the world, but . . . However I had better repeat what I have already adumbrated; in my hottish, lateish youth I did, but of course only sentimentally, take sides in a French political matter. I was a convinced anti-Dreyfusard, not because I for one moment believed Dreyfus guilty, but because I hated the dreadful and lasting schism that the *Affaire* made in French life and because, for at least half the nation, it lessened the prestige of the French Army. And the French Army was sacred, because it was the only thing that could save . . . Provence.

And it did save Provence for civilisation—which is the only thing I much care about in life. So it retains for me its sacred aspect. If it came to a war between France and my own country I should fight for my own country, but if there were a war between France and any other country in the world—or the whole world—I would sooner die than not fight in the French ranks. It is because almost every non-Frenchman in the world, *mutatis mutandis*, thinks like that that France is eternal.

Well then, if ever in a French drawing-room latterly, I have chanced—because I am obstinate—to hint that the French Army preserved for me something of a sacred aspect, I have always been met at first with a blank non-comprehension and then with such a pretty smile and the words: "How *charming*!" . . . Much as if, in an English

drawing-room full of Intellectuals an amiable but antediluvian French gentleman should express a lyric admiration for the British Constitution—for something admirable which we possess but about which we never think. Something like that!

I suppose by now the cat is out of the bag and that it is apparent that, for me, the province of France and the mission of Civilisation is to save Provence from which has come all of civilisation that we have. It is really that for the rest of the Western world too, whether they like it or not. And when I sit here in this large, be-raftered room with the immense fireplace on which tree-trunks await the first day of winter, and when I look out on the repulsively lush greenness beneath the rain-storms, day after day, of August—of August, mind you!—and across the endless plain of the Brie, from which the cheeses come and over which sweep the unending rain-storms like immense theatre curtains slowly descending and rising—and when I think that, down there between Avignon and the sea, on the old walls the lizards bask in the sun, and the olive trees whisper, and the rosemary and lavender in the interstices of the warm rocks give out their scent to the foot that crushes them beneath the sun, I . . .

That may seem a far cry from the Latin Quarter and its youth, but it isn't. On the Right Youth cries:

> But this I can tell: that all shall be well
> When King Charles enjoys his own again,

and on the Left they cry, les Jeunes :

> Far in sea beyond Hispaigne
> Is a lond yclept Cockaygne,
> Ther nis lond under Hevene rich
> For wel of godnes hit ilych. . . .

And the young of the Centre—for I will permit myself to regard M. Paul Valéry as standing for the young of the Centre—exclaim :

"Et dans le même désordre mental, à l'appel de la même angoisse, l'Europe cultivée a subi la reviviscence rapide de ses innombrables pensées : dogmes, philosophies, idéaux hétérogènes ; les trois cents manières d'expliquer le Monde, les mille et une nuances de Christianisme, les deux douzaines de positivismes : tout le spectre de la lumière intellectuelle a étalé ses couleurs incompatibles, éclairant d'une étrange lueur contradictoire l'agonie de l'âme européenne. . . ."

But indeed that phrase—the death-struggle of the European soul !—is the note of the whole of French youth, at any rate in the Latin Quarter. A note of violence and of agony ! Beneath its banner Camelots du Roy, Communists, Hyper-realists, Conscious Bad Writers, upholders of the marriage of French men with German women, march in procession in the streets round the Pantheon, bash policemen who take it good-humouredly enough, bash each other with more ferocity, smash windows of the Sorbonne, chase Ministers of Education through the streets—and overturn Ministries ! For it is uncertain

whether the appointment out of turn of a Government favourite to a chair of law at the Sorbonne, the decision to abolish the embassy to the Vatican—both these being factors in the doctrines of one or the other type of extremist youth in the Quartier Latin—or the state of the franc most contributed to the fall of a late ministry. In any case all these Groups, none being Nihilist, all being frantically at work in search of A Method, all seek . . . a Cloud-Cuckoo Land. And the only Cloud-Cuckoo Land in the world is Provence.

The only real one. . . . For obviously for, let us say, Americans of—well!—Senatorial rank, or for Englishmen of the City or, say, the picture-dealing class, the Paris of the Other Side round which they are guided by the suspect gentlemen who accost you at every angle of the Place de l'Opéra, or, for less well put up to it Americans and English of the same classes, and their wives, the Côte d'Azur between Nice and Monte Carlo, are really Cloud-Cuckoo Lands—where nice little pigs ready roasted run about crying: "Eat me! Eat me!"

And then, working Southward, we come to the Montparnasse Quarter, the latest of all Cloud-Cuckoo Lands. . . . Indigent compared with the Other Side, relatively un-be-bathroomed, unmarbled, un-gilded; without the lifts, the palms, the sea and the hotel lounges of the Riviera; without the sun, the lizards, the fanfares, the bull-fights and the *fen de brut* of Provence,

the Montparnasse Quarter is nevertheless a dingy-ish refuge for myriads coming from the west and the north and desiring to get as near Life as their circumstances will allow. Heaven knows I do not wish to be taken as poking fun at indigence. In a post-war world I have come to believe that the indigent alone are the only persons worthy of respect—or at any rate those who are frugal and undispendious, and it seems to me that the young men who work their passages from Cardiff or Indiana and, arriving in Paris without knowledge of the language or money for taxis, at dead of night make somehow their way to the Luxembourg Gardens round which they wander seeking an entrance, till dawn—these Young are the salt of the Anglo-Saxon. (They do this because of Remy de Gourmont's *Night in the Luxembourg*, which makes them imagine that you can sleep on a bench beneath the statue of Verlaine.) And there are enough of young men like these to make the Montparnasse district almost worthwhile of themselves. So, if one adds the several distinguished practitioners of all the arts who work there (I *can't* work there myself), it really does assume a very marked aspect of worthwhileness. I should imagine (again I remark that I don't work there myself) that the most vital work in the Arts that is now being produced is the work of artists living somewhere in the square of territory included between the Luxembourg Palace, the Lion de Belfort, the place du Maine and the bottom of the rue de

Rennes—or at any rate by workers very familiar with those *parages*. I am of course talking of non-French artists who are there in the immense majority.

It is in that that to me the Montparnasse district is profoundly disappointing. Before the war Paris was a truly international centre, artists of all shades and nations meeting and interchanging ideas very freely, mostly in Montmartre, which was then predominantly grey and industrious with a mere fringe of night establishments round the rue Pigalle; and of course it was predominantly French. But not bitterly or exclusively French.

The Montparnasse district is a bran-new phenomenon as an artists' quarter, but it is a phenomenon purely foreign where artists of every nationality except the French simply dislike the one the other amidst an atmosphere a great deal too much impregnated with alcohol. You have cafés full of Swedes, Finns, Letts, Danes, Polish and Russian refugees, amidst whom the Americans make so much noise that you would imagine the whole population came from New York or the Middle West—this being a fact for which the Prohibition Act in America is mostly responsible—whilst the numerically preponderant English are so nationally glum and taciturn that you would think there were none there. . . . And, coming from the Other Side, enormous chars-à-bancs full of the pallid faces of those hoping to see, in safety, a rioting Alsatia!

They don't. Nor is this quarter really an Alsatia : it is really a cheap Côte d'Azur, exhibiting all the aspects of that latter district, down to a native population rendered as odious as that of the French Riviera itself. So you get an atmosphere of inexpensive saturnalia with an ever present under-current of hatred. The foreigners come seeking a fabulous cheapness, or a fabulous laxness in sexual morality, that have no existence beneath the measly sumach trees with which the Boulevard is planted. And it is a curious fact that such cafés as the French still frequent in this Quarter are very much dearer than those exclusively overwhelmed by the foreigners, as are the restaurants. In the end it works out much the same, for the unacquaintance of the foreigners with the currency, the swindling of the waiters and the hotel-keepers and the enormous appetites for *consommations* of the invaders level things very much up—with a balance in favour of the indigenous population. The French bourgeois two hundred yards away pays a franc for his one coffee and three francs for its single accompanying *fine*, the English visitor will not pay more than fifteen sous for his coffee and two francs for his *fine*—but then the English visitors drink six, the Americans twelve and the Swedes fifteen *fines*, and though they miserably undertip the waiters they seldom miss dropping from five to ten francs of an evening. And we are despised for it.

It is a pity. It is the *grande pitié de la France*

of to-day—perhaps even of the world. I have never in French France from the Cevennes to the Mediterranean coyly revealed to an inhabitant that I was British without getting for my answer : "*Ah, c'est vous qui avez sauvé la France !*"—which, if it isn't true, is what we worked for, a decade since. But, if in the vicinity of the Boulevard Montparnasse I had occasion to spend a night in an hotel and let it slip out that I was Anglo-Saxon—for I can generally pass at least for an Alsatian and get decently treated—and farewell to any chance of my receiving even rudimentary civility, and farewell even to any chance of a night's rest. I shall be given a room over-populated with undesirable insects, and if I complain shall be told that I brought them with me.

That is easy enough to understand. I shall be taken for a mean, miserly, hateful individual, come for a week-end to prey on France of the depreciated franc, watching every sou's worth of what I get, hideously rude, nightly inebriated. It is just that every man's hand should be against me.

It is really just. We *are* invaders. We are pushing down as far in the direction of the Mediterranean as our means will let us, and we take with us our imbecile national prides, our appetites, our insolences, our grossness. In that sense we are not travellers who go to gain learning or profit ; we are the gentlemen who, in our national phrase, go where the booze is cheapest.

I don't know how it may be with England, I have been for so long out of touch with my own country; but I am credibly informed that it is the conviction of every American above fifty, of Senatorial rank, that he has only to come to this part of France and get invited to a private party and he will be in a Senatorial paradise. He has only to ask the first young lady there whose looks he likes to pass the night at an hotel or go to Italy with him to have his wishes gratified. I should imagine the information to be exaggerated. I have only twice seen Americans over fifty and of Senatorial rank engaging in this pursuit.

But even those two exploits were enough to cause a rather widespread indignation in the quieter regions of the South Bank.

The phenomenon may be only temporary. The franc may regain its level. Vice, I think, ought to be expensive. We ought to have to fight a little before we get to the shores of the Mediterranean—or even to the banks of the Seine!

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS

It is impossible to write of a country that is certainly the centre of the world without treating of politics—that is to say of international politics. But no created being is so little of a practical politician as this writer and my views *should* offend no one. As a matter of fact there is no one whom they will not offend. It is the luck of the game. . . .

In the beginning, then, there was the Mediterranean Hinterland—and a portion of its littoral. There has really never been anything else that sempiternally counted. Not perpetually and recurrently! The mere fact that no sensible or sentimental human being would live anywhere else once they were aware of the existence of this tract has meant that the world has been in a continual state of disturbance, the Nordic races—which include the inhabitants of North France—perpetually pressing down, in search either of poetry or plunder, towards the southern sea. Of that I have from my earliest years been curiously conscious.

My father, a man of singularly many Academic distinctions and diplomas, displayed, framed and

mentioned, only one of them—his charter—for it was as gorgeous as any charter !—of membership of the Félibriste Society. A shiny patch in his rather gloomy study it was continually under my eyes, and the only thing that my father ever taught me—for he was too impatient a man really to teach anybody anything—was a very little Provencal, by means of the poems of Guillem de Cabestanh, the Troubadour. . . .

> Li dous cossire quem don Amors soven
> Domnam' fan dire de vos mas vers plaszen,
> Pessan remire vostre cors car e gen
> Cui eu desire e cui non fas parven. . . .

I can remember certainly scores, if not hundreds, of the lines of Cabestanh, along with the rough translation I made, certainly before the age of fifteen :

> That pleasant fever which love anon doth bring,
> Lady, doth ever attune the songs I sing,
> Where I endeavour to catch again thy chaste,
> Sweet body's savour I crave but may not taste. . . .

It is not very near the original, but Cabestanh goes on for ever and ever with the rhymes *ire* and *en*. . . .

That then, and a little chess—over which he called me " the patient but extremely stupid donkey "—was all that in the way of learning I ever had from my father ; but it seems to have coloured my whole life, as indeed it coloured his.

For often enough when discouraged in his attempts to force the Music of the Future—what a poor old Future, now !—at first down the throats of the reluctant Parisians and then upon an almost more recalcitrant London, he would say that if he were a sensible man he would give up his work and pass the rest of his life in Maillane playing chess with Frédéric Mistral for whom he had a great affection. . . . And now, fifty years after or so, here I sit planning how to pass the rest of my life in St Rémy de Provence—which is six miles from Maillane but a little more sheltered from the wind called the mistral. Just to sit there for good and play chess, say, with Mr. Pound who is the living remplaçant of Mistral, though more ferocious than that poet as I remember him.

My French I had from my grandfather who, born in Calais and passing the whole of his youth and early manhood in France, knew French better than English, which indeed he never learned to spell correctly. But he insisted characteristically that although one must know French with accuracy one must speak it with a marked English accent to show that one is an English gentleman. I still do. He too, however, when the Manchester Town Council threatened to whitewash over his frescoes in their Town Hall and substitute for them advertisements of the wares in which they so eminently dealt, would declare that he would return to France which is indeed the mural painters' paradise, every public building

and many private ones having to have its fresco or its many frescoes.

So, from the very beginning of life—and no doubt in my ante-natal blood, I have always been subject to the feeling of a pressure towards that Southern magnetic Pole which lies in the region between Avignon, Arles and Nîmes. It is something really physical: I do not need to wonder about the instinct that guides migratory birds born under northern eaves in their flight homewards. I know it. For, in my coolish early manhood, walking beside the Channel, if I went towards the Land's End I would feel my blood pulsing towards my left side, and if I turned and went towards the North Foreland, immediately the pressure was towards my right hand. So I suppose the only really passionate poem I wrote in those immature days was called the *Great View*. They used to say that for a Scotsman the finest view in Scotland was that of the high-road leading into England. Well, here is the finest view in England:

Up here where the air's very clear
And the hills slope away right down to the day,
It is very like Heaven.
For the sea's wine-purple . . . and the vast marsh dozes,
And waving ploughland and willowy closes
Creep and creep up the soft south steep.
In the pallid North the grey
And ghostly downs do fold away
And spinning spider threadlets down the sea the sea-lights dance
And send down a wavering radiance. . . .

Very like Heaven,
For a glimmering of pink,
East, far East, past the sea-lights' distant blink,
Like a cloud, shell-pink,
Like the ear of a girl,
Like Venice-glass mirroring mother-of-pearl,
Like the small pink nails of my lovely lady's fingers
Where the skies drink the sea and the last light lies and lingers,
. . . There is France!

It is not a very good poem, but as evidence of a young nostalgia of the South it is good enough witness. I remember, having written it, I showed it with a good deal of pride to a distinguished novelist of the more self-conscious kind—and I remember still his puzzled face as he said that he did not see what it was all about. That was certainly twenty-five—and nearer thirty—years ago. He maintained stoutly that he did not see, as you might say, what there was to write home about in the distant view of France. But, when I took him up to that high place and showed him France in the distance, after I had badgered him a good deal, he confessed as it were: "Yes, well, perhaps. . . . There is a sort of . . . a sort of inclination to . . ."

It was a good deal to have made him go down beneath the wrappings of self-consciousness to an underlying paganism. For his full-dress self had to declare that its leanings were towards the more "intellectual" lands. To be in the then movement, he would have to declare that what he would have preferred to see would have been the Scandinavia of Ibsen, the Russia of Tolstoi

or the Germany of Karl Marx. So obviously the confession of original sin cost him an effort.

For it is original sin—to prefer the country of Maupassant to the lands of Ibsen. To prefer the latter you must make an effort; you must keep yourself in. But, alone with yourself, you face the truth. And, if I intrude so much biography of myself on the reader, it is only in order to present him with a truthful witness of the nature of this *Drang nach Suden*. For it is a universal pressure, its direction being only geographically diverted. Thus the Russian, pressing towards ice-free ports, makes for the Bosphorus and has his imaginations orientally tinged; the Austrians must have Venice and a romance of gondolas and palazzi. . . . Or the inhabitants of Samarcand desire the ports of Tyre and Athens, and have for thousands and more thousands of years. Original Sin. . . . *The* original sin. . . .

For, equally obviously, had that distinguished novelist and myself had other ambitions than the merely cultural it would not have been so long before, in pickelhaubes and at the goose-step, we should have gone to take possession of Maillane and to rape the great jars of *bouillabaisse* from all the restaurants in Marseilles! From that Guillem de Cabestanh, Arnaut Daniel, Peire Vidal and all the rest down to Frédéric Mistral have saved their land. Bertran de Born, too.

Fortunately it is not to the lips of all of us that

Was fuer Pluender ! rises at the contemplation of far-flung beauties, nor does it rise to the lips of anything like a majority of humanity. The American of Senatorial rank visits the southern parts of the South Bank as a conqueror, truly, but only as the conqueror of young females by means of the dollar bill ; the enormous crowds of pallid-faced people with falling jaws who pour in monstrous vehicles through the same southern districts and then down through the CHATTOHS of the Loire resemble, in the mode of their comings, the Vikings that of old went a-plundering in these directions. For, seen in the not brilliant illumination of the Boulevard Montparnasse, broadside on, these impossible cars resemble very much the longships with the shields hung along the outsides of the bulwarks. But be they, these Nordics, never so much descended from plundering ancestors, nothing is much farther from their thoughts than swords, shields, eagle-winged helms or the burning of towns. What they *are* after they could not tell you, nor indeed could I. Romance, no doubt ; a vague stirring towards the land where grows the lemon flower.

But indeed, the " urge " towards these districts arises from an infinite number of impulses or necessities. I met the other day in Tarascon the only Englishman I have ever met in the city of good King René. He was of the little, grey-tweeded, thin grey-bearded, slightly reddish-eyed type that our country exports so innumerably to the Continent at the tourist season. He

had no conversation, had read no books, had never looked at a picture and disliked music. He took no interest in either the good King René or St Martha who are buried side by side in the Cathedral of Tarascon; none in Buonaparte who saw his first military service in beautiful Beaucaire which is just across the Rhône; he had never heard of either the Tarasque or of Tartarin. He had manufactured cutlery all his life. There was no earthly reason apparently for his presence in that café, all closed up and shadowy from the blinding sunlight outside. The avocat, the avoué, the veterinary captain of the local cavalry regiment and I myself, all looked askance at this apparently motiveless and depressed individual.

Well, he had been dispossessed of his house by an elephant, *therefore* he had come to see the other end of the Great Trade Route!

Bertran de Born sent out wagonfuls of meat and wine to the starving troops of the Kings of England and Navarre, *therefore*, yesterday, you and I used to try to play the game, and a little bit more.

About to-day I do not know: we are all discouraged.

But the connection of each of those second half-sentences with their premises, remote though they may seem, is equally a matter of inevitability. We used to be decent people because of Bertran; my English friend came to Tarascon because of an elephant.

The elephant may be quickly disposed of : the Englishman lived at —— I forget the name of the village, it was somewhere in the West of England. He had retired. One night he heard a noise as if thunderbolts and mad trumpets were in his kitchen. He descended in his night-gown, holding aloft a flat candlestick. An elephant was mounting the kitchen stairs, mad no doubt with joy at the sight of him. The stairs would not bear the elephant, so our friend escaped his caresses, the elephant remaining in the basement.

Naturally the elephant had escaped from a travelling circus. At the end of his stay nothing remained in the basement. So there was a tidy sum for compensation and most of the house had to be re-built, the elephant having tried to push down the walls in its efforts to get out again. How then were the time and money to be expended ?

Well, all his life our friend had been obsessed by the idea of the Great Trade Route which, beginning as far as Europe is concerned at Marseilles, ran as far as Cornwall. And it was indeed a mysterious affair, for, said our friend, protected by tabu the merchant could travel from China to Troy, from Troy by boat to Marseilles and so overland past Beaucaire, up the Rhône, to Cornwall. The tradesman in those days was sacred.

And having been all his life an honest tradesman, all his life he had liked to muse on the days

when the tradesman had been sacred. Thus, on retiring from trade, he had fixed his residence at the western end of the Great Trade Route, and he had speculated much on what the other end, at Marseilles, could be like. . . Another Cloud-Cuckoo Land! Then, a god from the machine indeed, had come the elephant. So he had journeyed to Marseilles and was now following the mystic Route step by step back to Cornwall. The Fair of Beaucaire has been, down through all the ages, the great fair of South-Western Europe, having had its origin as a tabu-ground—a great fair, as great as once was Nijni Novgorod, another tabu-ground. . . .

Well, as persistently as our friend, pursuing with his eyes to the ground, looking neither at the castle of the good King René, nor at the lovely, lovely Castle of Beaucaire which was the castle of Aucassin and Nicolette, nor even at the Castle of Avignon which was the castle of the Popes; thinking nothing of the cooking; heeding in no way Tavel or Hermitage or even Château Neuf du Pape, for indeed he was a teetotaller and drank nothing but artificial lemonade—not even *café au lait*—so, persistently, has civilisation made its way along that Route, past Beaucaire, past Avignon, past Orange, past Notre-Dame de Paris, past St Denis, to the banks of the Rhine, to John o' Groat's House and to the remote Cassiterides.

Our civilisation! Of the Europe of yesterday. To-day it has suffered so badly at the hands of

the economists and the politicians who took our decent Europe in hand after the cannon had ceased to shake the dismembered earth—so badly that the whole edifice of energies and ideals totters as one used in Flanders to see the faces of old houses totter when one said: "One more shell will finish it!"

A very few more shells!

No doubt it will take more than the alarmists declare. I was in a house in French Flanders when three shells passed clean through the roof and burst in the houses beyond. You would have said that not one of those houses could have stood through the night; yet they were there next morning and in one of them, the *maire*, a dentist and a brave fellow, was extracting a tooth, with the plaster of the ceilings six inches deep on the floors. And they are there yet; or they were at the Armistice.

So human houses and civilisations live longer than one would think. The pity of it is that, like certain trees, they may develop the habit of dying off at the top. It is, that is to say, too often Thought and the Fine Arts that go first. Indeed that is bound to be the case in States mainly industrial. We Anglo-Saxons are, in that respect, several stages nearer barbarism than we were in the days when Matthew Arnold used to belabour us—and belabour us along just the lines that I am following now! France isn't—even the country north of the Île de France! As for the country south of the Massif Central,

from which immense well-head half the streams flow into the Atlantic and half into the Mediterranean—as for that country its civilisation has not suffered in the very least. It is gayer, richer, more pagan, lazier than ever it can have been, even when the Counts of Toulouse reigned, and the Courts of Love were held. That is what the world needs!

For it is of gaieties, paganisms, riches and lazinesses that civilisations are born. How far we are from Smiles, Carlyle, Kingsley and Co., not to mention Queen Victoria, when a publicist even *tel quel* dares to set down such words! Yet it is evident that, whatever you may get from the most prosperous industrialism, with a fringe of unemployment and all to keep the price of labour down, it will not be a civilisation, which is something founded on amenities and cemented by reflection, a little erudition of one kind or another—and the habit of sending out to forces besieging you beef, wine, oil and bread if their transport happens to have broken down. . . . You need perhaps also the mistral!

No doubt you need also the Notaire, the Avoué and the Avocat. For whatever happens to France—and Provence will always be rich because of the primeur!—it is impossible that France should ever become an industrial country. That it is safe to predict. It is impossible. You may say that there are Big Business Men. There are. I believe there are seven in France; or I may be

exaggerating. Perhaps there are only six. That is to say that there are half a dozen business men who would count beside the Great Names of the Anglo-Saxon world, and, had they put their energies into the same work in Anglo-Saxondom, they would have been Emperors, not only Kings, of the motor, the chocolate, the sugar, or the drapery world.

For, before in France you can do any Business at all, you must have made life-long study of how to negotiate with—to baffle!—the notaire, the avocat, the avoué, the banks, the post-offices and the settled belief in all your clerks and managers that to answer a letter by return of post is the first of the Deadly Sins.

The spirit of this race is definitely and self-consciously against Big Business, and any potential business man is treated as a potential criminal. I had, two years ago, to please a partner from New York who believed with a touching and luminous faith in the Limited Company, to run a small company, in Paris. The thing was impossible to do within the limits of the law and, at the beginning, every few days our own man of law threatened every one of the seven directors with gaol. Our own man of law, mind you; a cultivated, agreeable, æsthetically minded gentleman outside his Etude, but inside it something between a Pope and an Executioner, infinitely too sacred ever to keep an engagement, being always liable to be called away to the

Courts, and infinitely too remote from the earth ever to see that his clerks answered a letter! It was like being mad.

The only money in the Company was that of my partner and myself, yet our hands were tied in the most intricate manner—to prevent our robbing the shareholders who were ourselves! and more than one third of the capital went into the hands of the State, the Notaire, the Avoué, the Chambre de Commerce and the Government Journals in which we had to advertise our existence and constitution in small print for page after page. And then we had to re-advertise it because the clerk of our man of law had mistaken the formula! There appeared to be no one in that office who really knew Company Law right down to the bottom; indeed there appears to be no one in all the pleasant land of France. What good were else the drum and fife!

Then came the Banks! A French bank—a big one!—is a Chamber of Tortures, its Manager's room a Black Hole. So, I have heard, an English one may be, but for a converse reason! In England the difficulty is to get money out of a bank, in France you have to go down on your knees in order to get it in. Some years ago I wished to open an account with a French bank—the most important French bank in a Southern town. I got my English bank to send me a certain sum—which sounded large in France!—to the local branch of this bank. The English bank manager sent me a letter advising

me that the money had been sent, which was my only credential. I passed that letter over the counter, the head cashier glanced at it, hardly glanced at me, and proceeded to count out the notes.

Then the trouble began. I wished to open an account then and there. At once I was a criminal! I had to produce passports, *cartes d'identité*, photographs of myself for the use of the bank. My signature had to be verified by the Prefecture and by substantial inhabitants; I had to sign eighteen documents. And all the time I was treated with extreme coldness, if not with actual brutality.

I asked the manager at last why there was such a difference made between the paying out and the paying in. He said: "Well, you see, when it is a matter of paying out on an English order it is a simple affair. All you get is the money, even if you have no right to it. Besides it is the English bank that would lose it. . . . But when it comes to letting you have a cheque book: that is formidable! Who knows what uses you may not be going to make of it?" . . . We never, to this day, have succeeded in opening an account for that company. Indeed, we never should have succeeded in doing anything at all if I—I who write!—had not broken every imaginable branch of the Company Law of the Republic, incurring possible penalties of imprisonment that may last well beyond my lifetime.

But the French seem to like all that—the French-French: the Southerners do not care one way or the other, for with them money is something of which they are singularly careless. Sometimes they romantically want it; sometimes they don't care. I once—in Carcassonne—wanted a small link put into a gold chain, a matter of seven francs, or so. When I desired to pay the jeweller said: "How much? How should I know? We do not charge for little things like that. Besides, monsieur is a poet!" He had heard that through my hotel. On the other hand in St Rémy de Provence I had occasion to borrow a typewriter for half an hour from the olive-oil merchant, a very rich man. I did not expect to pay anything for the favour, but when I asked as a formality, a jolly, poetic, fat smile came out on his large features. He said, dreamily:

"I am in the mood to go to Avignon and have a good dinner. . . . Yes, a *good* dinner. . . . That will be twenty-five francs. . . . Yes, twenty-five. . . . Give me that, please." And in those days twenty-five francs were worth a pound and had there about three times the purchasing power of the pound. I ought perhaps to make the note that, elections being on in the town and the royalists being very active, I had shortly before been arrested as being the Duke of Orleans and, although I was honourably acquitted of that, an atmosphere of millionaire-ishness still hung about my garments.

So, in one way or the other, the French ignore matters of good business: they have not even got as far as the saying: "Honesty is the best policy"—the vilest of all mottoes. You find quite as many honest men scattered about France as elsewhere, but nowhere do you find as complete a disbelief of the idea that a business man *can* be honest and nowhere do you find so complete an acceptance of the fact. The French in the bulk will not go to the big banks. In the first place they completely refuse to imagine that their money will not be stolen; and, if they ever get over that suspicion, they aver—with what justice it is not for me to say—that if money is piled together in large quantities it makes it all the easier for politicians, who are all corrupt, to get hold of it. So the Frenchman prefers to trust his money in the hands of Monsieur Un Tel of his own village, a banker whose jovial face he well knows and with whom any day he may lunch at the best ordinary in the place, or in the hands of the Notaire, Maître Chose, who is also a local divinity. And, judging from the number of absconding small bankers who yearly appear in the French Courts and from the number of indigent persons you meet who will all declare that their Notaire has gone off with all their capital, that procedure would not be very much to the taste of an Anglo-Saxon. But the French like it that way. It certainly militates against the accumulation of vast fortunes.

Yes, they like it. For if you tell a Frenchman of even the Highest Bourgeoisie and reasonableness that ninety-eight per cent. of the wealth of the United States is in the hands of thirteen families he will be genuinely shocked.

CHAPTER V

THE BODY POLITIC

The indifference of the Frenchman towards his public affairs is indeed something amazing: it is as profound as the sea at its deepest and as immovable as the ice around the pole. Like every other Anglo-Saxon I have frequently evolved plans for the economic salvation of France and not infrequently I have laid my plans bare before serious Frenchmen, usually of the professional class. One begins naturally, by exposing the rottenness of the Post Office, of the Banking system . . . of anything from which at the moment one is suffering. The Frenchman listens to you and cordially but gloomily agrees with everything you say. Yes, he says, it must be admirable to live in England where letters are really delivered . . . or taxes really collected. Then he adds: "But, what would you, all French politicians are corrupt!"

And he begins to talk of Corot, or Cézanne, or the psychology of Marat or First Editions—for Frenchman of the professional class talk of these things when we talk of cricket-averages or the price of pig-iron f.o.b. And you cannot get him back to the subject of the salvation of France.

Nothing will do it. He accepts the defects of French systems as he accepts the inevitability of old age. And, being sober, serious and educated, he arranges himself to meet the inconveniences of the one as of the other. It is done in this way :

As an Anglo-Saxon one goes out of one's mind if one's letters posted at one o'clock on one day are not delivered in the metropolis, eighteen miles away, before 19.30, well after business hours, two days later. The Frenchman accepts the case philosophically. Since this six and a third miles a-day post bears equally on everybody he simply arranges his life and his business on that basis. After all his ancestors of the eighteenth century corresponded very happily before the invention of railways, with a postal service only a very little more rapid and efficient. Besides, no other fellow can get the better of him ; it is not as if any one could find anything better. It is in fact all very pleasant and the mood can pervade every department of life. If the Frenchman's mistress is engaged in dying or in betraying him on the Riviera, he himself being at Enghien, a suburb of Paris, and if letters take ten and telegrams five days in the answering—well, he just arranges not to care, if I may be pardoned using the expression, such a hell of a lot about what becomes of his mistress. So the French race evolves itself . . . and he will say, if not contentedly, then at least fatalistically—but most probably contentedly !—that all politicians are corrupt.

You will not at first catch the bearing of that remark, but somewhat later you will learn from the papers, it being then August, that the bonus due to be paid to postmen on the first of January has not yet been paid. Your French friend will then explain to you that that is because the sums allotted for that purpose in the budget are being used by gentlemen in the Palais Bourbon for their *petites amies* or as provision for the dread day when they shall be in opposition. This is very likely not true, but all France believes it—and accepts it. The way in which you counter it is by becoming an adept in not paying your taxes, so it all works out very pleasantly. Your French friend sympathises with the poor unpaid postman, who takes it out by going off duty in the middle of a round in order to plant his *poireaux*, and, as the Frenchman has no letters delivered to him, he is saved the fatigue of contemplating how, next week, he would have answered the letters that he ought to have received this morning. Thus contemplation flourishes as in no other region of the world.

I am indeed perfectly serious. This morning I have had no letters at all though I know that two were in the post four days ago, one containing the provisions of a bothering contract that will take me up to Paris and lose me at least a day. The sensation is perfectly blissful—one of the best I have ever known; and in these circumstances Thought runs more easily and delightfully than in any other, and though Art remains as long an affair as ever, Life in revenge seems to run

more slowly and so to be luxuriously prolonged. That is what one asks.

It is to be understood that I am talking now of France—of rural France, that is to say, which is the France that matters. In Paris there is an admirable institution called a *petit bleu* which really will convey a message for you from one side of the city to the other in two hours. But then Paris is the home of the foreigner and the politician, and, the cost of it being a franc—as who should say tuppence ha'penny or five cents—few Frenchmen except the seven Big Business Men ever use it. The foreigners use it, and the politicians, who however do not have to pay for it. Nevertheless, the foreign population being one-third, or one-sixth, according to the shade of journal that is giving the information, of the population of Paris, the institution is the most remunerative public affair in France.

All these matters are very complicated; no sooner is one hare started than innumerable others pour over the meadows. We started with politicians and postmen. Let us try to exhaust the latter class.

The postman, in France, then is, according to the point of view, a public curse or a benefactor to Thought and the Arts. In either case he is a sardonic humourist. I tried, a year or so ago, an experiment with one of them—a beery, slightly squinting, off-shouldered individual. I mean that, no doubt from having always his strap across his shoulder, he has acquired the chronic

gait of a footballer staving off a charge and rolls along the road continually pushing before him an unseen left-back. I awaited him by a letter box resembling a rabbit hutch with a slit in it, and balancing a letter between finger and thumb I asked him to pay particular attention to that letter. I said that if the contents of that letter were not communicated by my Paris correspondent to New York by the next cable I should lose a hundred pounds. His face, like an immovable comic mask, towards the ground, he said: "What's that?"

I repeated that if the information contained in that letter were not communicated to New York in the shortest possible time I should be the loser by ten thousand francs. (In this case that statement was not true, but it has occurred to me to lose a contract worth nearly as much owing to the dilatory habits of the French post office.)

That postman started with his whole body, except his face. He bent over so much that he appeared to be listening to an incredible legend issuing from the slit in the letter box. When he felt better he said that it would indeed be disagreeable to lose such a sum—and he went on to his leek-patch.

Towards six I waited for him and accompanied him in his walk to the post town. I asked him repeatedly, as we trudged along, whether he remembered about my letter. He repeated: "Yes, yes, la voilà! la voilà!" and patted the pocket over his heart. We are, I think, very good

friends, for, although I do not tip him so much as to make him despise me, I always give him that two sous above the regulation tariff that anywhere in France will make you respected as being generous yet careful. And he is always ready to oblige me in the kindly way of the French in such regions as no Anglo-Saxons have visited. He will, I mean, fetch me a doctor, or an unusual book from the Town library, or give me some special onion seed of his own growing—all the little things he will do that in the country one neighbour must do for the other. . . . And he has remarkably contributed, in the course of several walks into the post town, to the lurid knowledge of his neighbourhood that I possess.

Well, that letter he did not post for three days. I recovered it from the office and there is the postmark to prove it!

Now you are not to imagine—as I at first imagined—that that was done in order to inconvenience me. I consulted an all-wise informant about it and had this answer, which I have not the slightest doubt was correct: That poor fellow with his endless trudges over fourteen miles of rolling road—four times a day when he chose to do it—had absolutely no time for the softer, or any other, emotions. None. He must therefore get his Life—his very Life!—out of his mail-bag. He *must*! Now you cannot live without *les émotions fortes*. Think then what it meant to him to hold in his hands the life or death of ten thousand francs! Ten sacred

thousand francs! . . . For three whole days! It had been an ecstasy. I was not to think of lodging a complaint. That would indeed not be the thing at all. As any sort of a man I must be only too proud. To have communicated to a fellow-being three days of ecstasy!

It takes a Frenchman—though in this case it was a woman—to thus psychologise, charmingly and truthfully, a rural postman. When we Anglo-Saxons read that our record-holding letter-carrier has in the course of his life walked five million miles, or three times the distance from the earth to the sun, whichever is the greater, our patriotic bosoms swell and we think what fine fellows *we* are. But I find the other point of view more sympathetic.

And the analysis is not more exaggerated than the sympathy. The singularly democratic habit of mind of even what we should call the gentry in France makes it impossible for them to regard such a humble functionary as a mere machine of wood. I do not mean that all the French are more humane than all Anglo-Saxons, but they are all—practically all!—more sympathetic, in so far as sympathy means imaginative insight. Obviously this may make them more cruel, but I would rather trust to the tender mercies of the cruel who know what they are doing than incur the blundering cruelties of a schoolboy. The one will stop when the tormentor has had enough, the other never. My postman, after that, delivered my letters with a tender regu-

larity: he would come two miles or so out of his way to deliver at my house when he had no other letters in his bag for that village. *His* imaginative sympathy was at work. He considered how grieved I must be at the loss of so much money. And he would have been more sympathetic still if it had been only a few sous.

But, as for seeking redress at the hands of that postman's superior officials—that the wise man would never do! Never!

Not only is it not sporting—and that ought to be sufficient!—but you will make yourself unpopular with your neighbours who are all cousins of the functionary; in addition you will never see a letter again; further, nothing will happen to the postman and, worst of all, you will come into contact with an Official. There are French men and women of heroic build who delight in battling with the bureaucracy, but the rest of the world—and *all* foreigners certainly should do it!—creep in and out between those mighty legs until they are buried.

According to the journals of one type the bureaucratic population of France is one-third of the total; according to those of another shade, it is one-sixth. The figures may be exaggerated, but in France there is no means of knowing. Nobody knows, and the papers say what they like. I am talking of course of official matters, of laws, decrees, regulations; of railway fares, rebates of taxes, money orders, subscriptions to

State Theatres and such things. There *is* no knowing!

If *you* go to *your* bank to ask for the return of your cancelled cheques that have receipts on the back of them your bank manager, with the manner of an executioner, will inform you that you are attempting a most serious offence against the law. Your cheques must remain at the bank for the inspection of the Fisc: you will never see your cheques again. You ask your manager what happens in the case of forgeries. He answers that so skilled are his clerks and cashiers that no forgery could ever pass their scrutiny. You consult your lawyer about this, since it is very inconvenient in certain classes of business not to be able to print a form of receipt on the backs of your cheques. Your lawyer pulls out from a drawer a letter that he has just received from the Banque de France—a letter bitterly pointing out that he has not collected his cancelled cheques for at least a fortnight; that he has incurred a penalty by not having his cheques on his premises for inspection by the Fisc which has no access to banks. In country towns the branch manager of the bank that refused you your cheques will be very offensive to you if you do not step in every few days to inspect your cheques, the bank having suffered so much from forgeries.

I do not know whether bank managers in France are or are not State officials. I imagine that they themselves are unsure, but rather

think they are. No doubt they take some sort of oath. But when it comes to other human beings, if you wish to regard the bureaucratic body as making up one-third of the population the aspiration is not difficult to fulfil. Thus all notaires, avoués, avocats, all their assistants, all doctors, pharmacists, veterinaries and their assistants; everyone in and around a prefecture; all maires and their assistants; all tobacco-merchants and their families; all road-menders whilst engaged in mending roads, may be so regarded if one wishes, in addition to the immense body of civil servants, naval and military officers, managers, actors, actresses, box-openers and scene-shifters of the state theatres. . . . There is no end to it. So that if you insult the infant child of a tobacconist whilst it is selling you a postage stamp you may very well be summoned for insulting a State functionary in the exercise of its duty. The penalty is not so portentous as that for *lèse-majesté* in Germany or for contempt of court in England, and, indeed, if you can convince the magistrate that you were suffering from toothache, or, still better, from unrequited affection, preferably for a Frenchwoman, you will be let off with a friendly homily from the magistrate. . . . Other people will tell you that it is not *lèse-majesté* to insult a tobacconist's infant—but the foreigner who is prudent will regard everybody he meets as an official and will insult no one.

The charm of the French system is that it is

all a great lucky-bag; the defect is the loss of time that it causes. You *may* insult a public official and get quite good fun out of it; on the other hand you may, merely because you exist, suffer a great deal of inconvenience. I was once on the back platform of a 'bus on a blazing day, beside me a mournful policeman. A citizen of Paris, who had obviously partaken too freely of the heart's blood of his country, climbed on to the platform and began to insult the policeman, calling him *sale flic*! a term of considerable opprobrium. The policeman continued to regard the façade of the Odéon. There were three of us on that platform: the inebriated gentleman proceeded to hustle the policeman, telling him that he was occupying the place of decent citizens without having paid his fare. The policeman removed to the other side of the platform and silently produced from his belt the ticket which showed that he had duly paid his six sous. The inebriate continued his abuse and at last, just before a stopping place, took the policeman by the shoulders and hurled him off the vehicle. The policeman fell on his hands and knees: the 'bus stopped immediately before a police post. Several gendarmes with their hands in their pockets sauntered out to gaze at the uprising of their comrade; then, languidly, they invited the inebriate to enter their cells, which he did, very good-humouredly, the first policeman supporting him tenderly by the arm. In the event, as I saw by the papers, he was

taken that afternoon before a magistrate to whom boldly and loquaciously he proved that he was a public benefactor. The production of wine is the most ancient, as it is the staple, trade of France. It is the duty of every good patriot to drink large—nay enormous!—quantities of wine, especially if, as was that morning the case, the thermometer stood at 104° in the shade. To insult a public functionary whilst yourself performing a patriotic action was not to insult a functionary. . . . And the magistrate kindly agreed, suggesting, however, that it would be better if in future the patriot consumed his wine within his own four walls and did not venture into the hot streets until the effects of the fumes had passed off. It was all very decent, kindly and friendly. Still it is not advisable to knock *flics* about unless you are very inebriated, and even then you will come to considerable grief if you happen to have upon your person a penknife, the blade of which can be bolted so as to keep open. For that is carrying prohibited arms, an offence for which you might be transported or you might be fined six francs, or you might be both transported and fined without benefit of the First Offenders' Act. There was not so very long ago a distinguished practitioner of one of the arts who had occasion to shoot his wife in the divorce courts immediately after she had secured a decree giving her the custody of an only daughter. At the subsequent trial it was held that his action had done credit to his

paternal emotions, but he was fined six francs, *avec sursis*, for carrying a prohibited arm, to whit, the revolver, and ten further francs without *sursis* for contempt of court in that he had committed the latter crime in presence of the judges.

This is an exaggerated case, but it is to be remembered that in France judges and juries have the parties before them in high states of nervous excitement, during which the individual is apt to speak the truth very satisfyingly. If an actor shoots a manager of a municipal theatre, in England he will automatically suffer the penalty of the law—but supposing it be proved that just before the shooting, the manager, a person having very wide powers, has said to the actor that he will see to it that the actor starves and that his wife and daughter go on the streets ? . . . What then ? I think that I would rather be tried by a jury of the Seine than by one of my own countrymen. I am sure that every Frenchman would.

And that is the point to be remembered. The real penalty of coming in contact with any sort of authority in France is delay, and that the Frenchman does not very much mind, whilst the bureaucrat loves inflicting it. . . . Thus one person is pleased and the other not injured. It does not matter of what kind is the functionary. If you go to buy a postage stamp at a post office—which nobody does !—you will wait ten minutes whilst an abstracted lady behind the counter

reads a completely incomprehensible new regulation as to rubber stamps and their use. She will consult several colleagues and the chief postmaster before attending to you. But she is not offensive like the young lady behind the brass grille in any suburb of London. She *likes* the tension that waiting induces between personality and personality, and she *likes* thus enhancing the sacredness of her cloth. And when she does attend to you, as like as not she will be very kind and attentive, offering you good advice. I have even had my postage stamps licked for me by an official! On the other hand, being human, I once determined, myself, to recover the amount of a *mandat postal*—a post office money order—that had gone astray. Usually you do this through official channels, or by giving a postman an enormous tip, or by putting the matter in the hands of an adviser of public companies. But this takes seven weeks, so I went myself to the immense building in the Boulevard Montparnasse which was the proper place to which to go. It was just after two. I explained my business to a smiling and not unattractive charwoman, who introduced me to the attractive office of the head of the establishment, where I sat, for half an hour, in a comfortable chair, admiring the roses on the official table. I did not think I ought to smoke. The kindly functionary, when he returned from lunch, examined my documents with great attention and consulted very patiently an officer in a blue

uniform. They arrived at the conclusion that I ought to go to the chief sub-office in a road across the town whose name I have forgotten. They said almost affectionately: How different all this is from the life in the trenches! Ah yes!

At the Chief Sub-Office for the Recovery of Money Orders the concierge directed me unhesitatingly to Room V on the sixth floor. Here there was a most attractive—a *most* attractive young woman in a pretty room, smoking a cigarette behind a table. She invited me to smoke because her chief was engaged, and we passed nearly an hour very agreeably talking about face powders and the like. The attractive young man who was her chief studied my papers for a very long time, asked me several questions about my war services and the number of persons in my family. Then he said very decidedly that this was not the place to come to. I ought to go back to the Boulevard Montparnasse, but to Room XVI on the third floor. And, he said, how different was all this from the life of the trenches whilst we shook hands.

I felt a certain satisfaction at being confirmed in my idea that I was right after all in going to the institution in the Boulevard Montparnasse, but my strongest emotion was that of envy of him for his subordinate. It must certainly have been different from the life of the trenches. However, from the Boulevard Montparnasse they sent me back to Room XI in the chief Sub-Office; from there back to Room IX, Boulevard

Montparnasse ; from there to Room III C.S.O. ; from there to Room XIV C.S.O. ; from there to Room XIII B.M. . . . *That* proved to be the lucky number, and I was properly elated at being in the right. The impressive official there, whilst shaking me cordially by the hand—he had only one arm !—and telling me that this was indeed different from the life of the trenches, assured me that I should receive that money by the first post on the morrow. I received it seven weeks later through the medium of the postman to whom I had given an enormous tip. . . . But it had been a pleasant and gay experience. And there is no human being who can deny the truth of this story, for there is no other human being who has ever had the perseverance to go through with that experiment. I have, however, never found a Frenchman to doubt it.

And as a whole the French bureaucrat is *bon enfant* ; he likes to watch you on the rack for an hour, for two or three. But in the end he will generally come out with a smile and help you. I was lately abominably taken to task by a functionary in what we should call one of the first-class Government offices—those which concern themselves with War, Finance or Foreign Affairs. But even his colleagues trembled at the name of this official. I had gone to ask him, being duly accredited, for a little information—over which he corrected himself three times and then proved wrong—and for a slight favour in the shape of a very slight irregularity at which his superiors in

the office had been ready to connive. He, however, was incorruptible; he became almost sea-green and you should have heard him talk of and—over the telephone—to his superiors in that office. He had the manners of a gaoler and lions are not more fell. Me he hinted at expelling at once from France. I have never been addressed by anyone with so peremptory a voice. . . . But when it was all over he sprang up from behind his table, grasped my hand in a tremendous grip, opened the door for me, laughed at the top of his voice, said he would do his best for the person I was trying to help—and that it had been very different in the trenches! I rather felt as if, till then, it hadn't.

All this the French like, liking actualities and games of chance. Indeed, I believe they would rather be bullied by functionaries than dispense with them. And it is to be remembered that there is in French life a mystical or almost mystical factor that runs through the whole nation; that is the belief that everything can be accomplished by means of a whisper in the ear of Authority. If you happen to let it get out in your neighbourhood that you are acquainted with a Minister, on the next morning your dwelling will resemble the house of an eighteenth-century nobleman at the hour of his levée, and your walks abroad will take place between avenues of suppliants, all cap in hand. You will be asked to bring about by a word in the ear

of your august friend the most improbable and dissimilar promotions: schoolmasters will ask you to get them removed from one grade and placed in another: medical students will ask you to get them licences to perform forbidden vivisections; widows will beseech you to obtain for their sons improbable jobs for which the sons have passed no examinations and for which they are in no wise qualified. The very poor will beg you to obtain for them licences to beg on church steps or round the tables of restaurants. There will be no end to it until your ministerial friend falls from power: then no one in your *arrondissement* will so much as know you by sight!

And this lustre attaches to all functionaries, no doubt in diminishing proportions, from the highest to the lowest. For myself I never succeeded in obtaining favours from anyone, except a roadmender who, though of the very lowest and not a State functionary, is at least nothing less than a cantonal official. This gentleman has permitted me to take sufficient of his admirable road-scrapings to make a large *massif*, or raised flower-bed in which there have bloomed to perfection creeping jenny, pansies, snapdragons and Scotch roses. Perhaps I have not the knack to get any more than that. Perhaps, even, no one has. Nevertheless, if you deprived France of her functionaries you would deprive her of much of her tender romance. And this applies to all France, not merely to the City of

Paris. For every provincial deputy is expected to be the earpiece, for all his stay-at-home constituents, of at least one minister. If he is re-elected he usually has been !

Outside Paris and the Banlieue the Frenchman is singularly averse from locomotion. If you go from almost any of the big stations in Paris towards the hour of six, and later for a little, you will find exactly the same crowd that at the same hour you will find at Liverpool Street, or at any of the commuters' stations in New York, in Brussels and in any other cosmopolitan city of the world. There will be the same proportion of not-rich Jews, of minor commercial employees carrying flowers in pots, of young women of the typist class carrying satchels or parcels of millinery. They will wear the same expressions, walk at the same pace ; in those trains as everywhere else you will see cheerful quartettes of men with overcoats across their knees, beginning to play cards the minute the train moves, and in those trains as in similar trains everywhere else, on your entering certain compartments and occupying certain seats you will find yourself looked at askance because you are taking a place usually regarded as sacred to some special traveller, the member of a little clique that have used that carriage in that train daily, for years. So that, except of course for the obvious differences in the language on the railway placards and in shapes of carriages and engines, there is nothing in the world to show

that you are not on a suburban line anywhere else in the Western hemisphere. Nothing in the world.

All these people, hurrying along, carry newspapers.

And you may put it that what most strongly differentiates the Parisian of the North Side and the suburbs from the French Frenchman is that he reads newspapers of a stereotyped character avidly and with regularity at every minute of interrupted leisure. If he had an hour or so he would read a book, but in the odd half-hours in one type of vehicle or the other he must have his mind bombarded by the constant little spray of pellets of fiction called *faits divers*. He cannot do without that—and it is because the French Frenchman can that he differs from all the rest of that world into which the Parisian un-Frenchman simply fuses. Vastly—but *vastly*! —better educated as he is than his Anglo-Saxon colleague, the Paris suburban commuter still has his mind diluted, watered down, by the endless almost-nothingnesses that occupy it during his morning and evening transits. And, though capable of thought when urgently called to it, he tends to indulge in that employment less and less and so to assimilate himself to ourselves.

Of the French newspaper Press I know next to nothing—I mean as to its shades, motives, credibilities and the rest of it. I naturally read two newspapers a day, but they tell me very little and, as far as I am acquainted with it, do

not represent public opinion in France in the very least. (I am talking of journals that are said to have the largest circulations in France.) Suburban social opinion they may represent; but in matters of politics they certainly do not do anything of the sort. In France, as in Anglo-Saxondom, nothing is more common than to find all the big papers in unison shouting for one policy or in behalf of one group of politicians. Then comes a general election and practically the whole country makes a landslide in a contrary direction. That seems rather unaccountable: one can only imagine that, either the brilliant accounts of *causes célèbres*, of *crimes passionnels* and all the rebuses and *faits divers* occupy exclusively the attentions of the readers: or it may be that what we may call Big Four journalism here, as the world over, so strains the note of its advocacies as to leave even the most naïf unconvinced. The minds of even such readers as are attuned to the rebuses and the million-franc prizes cannot perhaps stomach the political headlines. The thing to sober minds has always appeared overdone: perhaps sober minds are more plenty than one had thought.

Anyhow what attracts the Boulevard—and the suburban-Parisian mind—appears, except in bulk, to attract the whole of two Anglo-Saxon publics. But even the suburban Parisian cannot stand a surfeit of the stuff. You can do what is called tearing the guts out of any English paper in four minutes, and of any American daily in

two and a half if you are not interested in baseball. A French paper you can exhaust in a minute, the amount of news being small and the headlines really luminous. But, in revenge, in even the most popular French paper there will always be from six to ten minutes' worth of good reading even if it be only a little essay on contemporary manners. Indeed many of the daily —what I believe are called in England "turnovers" and in the United States I think column-writing—many of the daily articles of this type are as good as the sort of thing possibly can be. One simply cannot believe that the writers can day after day think so quickly and write so well. But they do it.

One thing that makes it particularly difficult for the uninstructed reader to ascertain what, politically, French papers of the popular type are, as you might say, getting at, is that they contain no editorials. The heavier journals on the other hand contain practically nothing else, but the views expressed are as a rule so official and the news so colourless that these monstrous, palely-printed affairs are almost unbearable to anyone not desiring to spend his life with a daily journal held up before, and ruining, his eyes. I am being irreverent and must not be taken too seriously!

This sort of thing is however not very much in my line, and I am only making the excursion because you cannot very well understand a people unless you know how it employs itself on

its train-journeys. And indeed the only reason for my just brushing this subject as it were with a feather is that you cannot get really the effect of what the real Frenchman is unless you appreciate what he most emphatically isn't. What he most emphatically isn't, is easily displaceable, or any great reader of daily papers. I don't mean to say that he isn't on occasion a traveller or that he isn't a great reader, for the amount of time that even the small bourgeoisie of country towns will spend on books would amaze an English or American grocer, or parson! And the number of French people whom I have heard say that they have visited the Scottish Highlands amazes even myself. That is because of the Waverley novels. And these are people who would regard a visit to Paris as something only to be undertaken with the utmost trepidation.

For it must be remembered that France is a great, wild country. Once you are out of Paris to the South it stretches on and on, towering up into massive, terraced heights, burrowing deep into valleys, stretching out for ever in plateaux enormously on high, opening down into great dales. . . . I remember one such view.

A great upland plain, then, extends itself, from le Puy and the range of misty and volcanic mountains culminating in the Gerbier de Joncs, to the terrific heights from which you look down on the Rhône above Valence. At that latter edge you have the sense of being an ant that should

have come to the edge of a plate balanced on the lightning conductor of the Tour Eiffel. How high you actually are I don't know, for figures convey very little to me. Say you are at 1,300 metres, or 4,000 feet above sea-level, or some good way up to the shoulder of Mont Blanc. . . . High enough not to be made to feel contemptible beside that large and contemptuous Thing. Very high. When you come up there from the plains you are very sensible, in the drums of your ears, of a change in the atmospheric pressure due to altitude.

Or, to put it in another way, here you are so high that the spring, summer and autumn seasons are telescoped into one flash, the winter seeming eternal. Spring begins in May, autumn ends in September. The cows then go into their byres —it is, as are all Alpine districts, a dairying country, intensely, incredibly green, when it is not uniformly white. You see in the exaggeratedly stony street of a little, huddled-together town, a hard-featured Huguenot widow with a white coif to show that she is a Protestant. Her husband came home from the war, invalided, in August 1918, having been gone just four years. Their farm stands up pleasantly in the exhilarating sunshine half-way to the top of a vividly green bank—*on* that bank, like a cardboard child's house, without any border of gardens or orchards, the warm season being too short to plant household vegetables or to grow fruit. If you climb up there from the plateau, which you can do in

half an hour, as like as not you will get your *goûter* of chicory, warm milk and warm, light cake with warm plum jam. Well, that woman's husband died at the end of September 1918 and they could not get the body away or buried until the beginning of next March, the woman being alone in the house that was buried beneath the snow—with three children, the eldest a boy of eleven. The boy would try to shovel out a path in the mornings, working all day, but in the night the snow would cover up his path again. . . . The woman, to look at, is just a hard-featured, brown, youngish woman, very clean run. They had of course their winter store of provisions in the house.

That then is the winter. The open months are kaleidoscopic. It is hardly possible to believe in, even when you see, the brilliance of the flowers in the meadows that wave deliriously all over those plains. I have never imagined colours all so at the topmost brilliance of their hues, clashing together. In a day it is all gone, brown, shorn fields replacing them, running up into the mountains, and the nightingales in their thousands already hoarse at the end of the breeding season. Such wheat as there is is green one day, golden the next, the crickets all chirping in the dry walls beneath the most brilliant imaginable of suns in the rarefied atmosphere and the beech forests in their full glory. The markets are in full blast ; the little towns full of clamour, the trout swarming in the swift streams.

In a breath, the wheat fields are bare, a few pigeons re-gleaning after the gleaners ; the shots of the *ouverture de chasse* resound, you see hares turn somersaults across the brown acres. A cold wind under a leaden sky goes all across the country, the clouds look heavy. The cattle go into their byres from which they will not emerge till the spring, the tops of all the houses being stuffed with hay, the cattle stalled on the ground floors, humanity occupying the between-storeys. . . . It is quick, like that.

A corner of France, naturally it is an exceptional corner—but all the corners of France are exceptional, and from this great, wild country the populations of the plains, of the valley of the Rhône, the Crau, the Camargue and even the Côte d'Azur have recruited themselves for ages. It is here that you find the great love of the soil that for so many centuries has distinguished the French. In this upland plateau the streams dig deep and precipitous valleys, extraordinarily precipitous ! You are here far to the South, and in the valley bottoms, a few yards as the crow flies from you on the majestic main road, you have a climate of vines, melons and figs. You can almost throw a stone, certainly you can shoot an arrow, from the climate of the Hebrides into that of Corsica. It is very astonishing to see.

What is almost more astonishing is that all these precipitous valley sides, to the very tops of the mountains, are terraced, the cultivations at the bottom being vines, buckwheat and maize ;

at the top, very meagre fields of barley, mostly, with a few oats, like a thin beard. The thews and hip-muscles that have made those terraces and carried up the dung for the upper fields must have been amazing: you would think that to bear anything up those heights would overfatigue an eagle. At harvest-times the crops are carried down on women's backs to the ox-carts waiting in the roads, to zigzag down into the semi-tropical valleys, through the beech woods.

In these valleys shelter the debris of the religious wars of France, and of other lands, for the plains round them have always bred religious latitudinarianisms; when the French of the Ile de France harried and burned out the Albigenses of Provence they fought their last fights at the mouths of these valleys, and it was the same during the wars of the Ligue and after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. So you had—from the Catholic point of view—a heretical stronghold, an immense fortalice crannied and warrened with the farms of the unorthodox—and the very tough! And no doubt these valleys and plateaux shone like a beacon across the world to persecuted sects, for in one valley you will find a tiny hamlet of Macdonaldists, the last survivors of a sect persecuted in Scotland in the days of Charles I; in another there are Brownists, descendants of the early Covenanters, and even Anabaptists, all preserving their rites—or no rites—and observances—a sternish, but not joyless, population, with very little flesh on the bones, but animated

enough on summer market days, babbling, shouting and chattering with all the clamour of the South.

It is difficult to figure to oneself, in the modern world of the exhibition and labour appliance, the attraction of this laborious country-side. Yet the attraction is there, and in the streets of the town as in the small farms you will hear almost as much of North-Italian patois as of the impure Provencal that is the local speech, and I believe this is the most be-emigrated-into district of a France that is almost the last refuge of the immigrants of all Europe. It is a curious phenomenon.

They say that, from the time of the Cæsars and before, the populations of these uplands have always drained down into the southern plains, in the guise of servants, attendants and hired cultivators, going in one way or another in search of warmth and to minister to the pleasures of peoples relatively less frugal and industrious. But the drain has always been replaced and accounted for—by the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Huguenots, and the Macdonaldists and the rest. The late war more than doubled the constant drain, the recruits going from here into the Diables Bleus, the famous mountaineering regiments that were so heavily used, and in any case, not returning much after the pleasures of the lowlands the world over had been tasted of. You find fewer returned combatants in the towns and farms here than elsewhere in France, at any rate

as I know the country; and all this region is distinctly what we should call Pacifist in complexion. But the places of those gone are pretty well filled by immigrants from Northern Italy—it is said, mostly by anti-Fascisti who may count, roughly, as a sort of Protestant. So no doubt in a generation they will come true to the old type: they will terrace and farm as their predecessors farmed, in between the great snowfalls, and in a generation or so they will begin to drain once more down into the plains to become hotel-servants and gardeners. It will all go on much the same.

Well, from the edge of this plateau, the sudden drop is terrifying. When there is mist in the Rhône valley, immense peaks arise above white vapours in ferocious jaggedness, in the circular formation of former craters, all across the world. When the mist rises, you have, immensely below your feet, the glint of the Rhône in flat, burnished flakes; very distant the shining glimpses of the Mediterranean, and the glance of the eye seems to be thrown, from side to side, in the precipitous undulations of all the hills, from the High Alps. In the sky, like a gleaming comet will be the downward-forking snows of Mont Blanc. . . .

From Snowdon, or from Ben Nevis, you have a view of London: but from here you have none of Paris. London *is* England, that is the difference. And to one born in such centralised conditions as myself it is astonishing to come into a French country where Paris so absolutely

does not exist. It is a condition with which I am fairly familiar, but it remains astonishing. The little air-resorts with which this country-side is scattered are filled with Marseillais, with the inhabitants of Lyons, of Toulouse, of Cette, of Algiers, Corsica and of Avignon—but though Anglo-Saxons form less than 4 per thousand of this summer populace, Parisians are fewer—and much more disliked. Indeed the English are liked there and there are no Americans. . . . But the local centre of this world is Lyons : you find silk-cultivation going on in all the lower valleys, and looming on the horizon, as London looms from Snowdon, you have Marseilles, a great, gay, immensely wealthy city. Or even Milan ! I remember as a curious detail that a rich, farming butter merchant of one of these little towns, having a wireless-telephonic installation, told me that he got most of his communications of course from Lyons, but many from some distributing station in Eastern England. None from the Eiffel Tower. I could not quite get at the reason for this : I did not very well understand his brand of Provencal and he turned off the question with a remark that I only half heard. I gathered that the reason was dislike !

For it is astonishing how, in a curious, envious-sneering way, the Parisian is disliked as soon as he gets out of the immediate influence of the Grands Boulevards. Even in the Banlieue where the little, frail erections of the city-workers are

beginning to crowd out the old inhabitants, the market-gardeners and the rest, such old inhabitants as remain talk with contempt of "*les Parisiens.*" The other day in a village not fifteen miles from the Porte St Denis I noticed little groups talking in the street. They were really agitatedly repeating something over and over again. "He said," they exclaimed, "what difference does it make to me if the price of bread goes up two sous? It will cost my household ten sous a week extra. What is ten sous!" And then with an expression of vituperative contempt: "*Ah, les Parisiens!*" . . . And those people mostly making toothpicks at thirty sous a thousand and earning by a hard week's work at most fourteen francs, with luck, the saying was all over the village. The speaker who had carelessly addressed those words to his *femme de ménage* was a not unkindly, not at all ostentatious, wealthy bourgeois from the metropolis. But every speech that he makes—at any rate every speech that he makes in the hearing of his *femme de ménage* is repeated all over the village, always with the gloating comment: "*Ah, les Parisiens!*" . . .

It is curious what lies at the root of this feeling. For the Frenchman of France proper, the Parisian is at once helpless and maleficent. He cannot tell a field of turnips from wheat, he cannot harness a horse, find his way from village to village, black his own boots, understand the local witticisms or even understand the local

language. In that respect he is pathetically helpless. You speak to him slowly and patiently as if to a child. On the other hand he is wealthy with grinding the faces of the poor and with money obtained from corrupt politicians, Paris sucking up the life-juices of the country: so you keep your wealth in a stocking up the chimney. Living near and so having the ear of the corrupt politicians, he has strange powers and exacts from you a respect of manner that hardly in the old days you would have paid to the seigneurs of your manor. Worst of all, he has strange knowledges, of how to garrote, of how to rob, and of terrifying vices of a sexual nature. So, if he got you in his clutches in Paris, you would very soon find yourself in the Seine, throttled, penniless and with the loss of your immortal soul.

It is something like that, the details of the imaginations varying naturally with the class of the individual. In any case the good bourgeois of France, when something unheard of—an inheritance or election to the Chamber of Deputies—calls him to Paris, does it with all the precautions, rugs, hampers, pistols and hot bottles, of a long-distance traveller in the eighteenth century, all his relations and dependants waiting on and weeping round him from his entrance hall to the steps of the diligence or the motor char-à-bancs that will carry him to the distant main-line. I heard the other day of a deputy from somewhere isolated who took up

his quarters in an obscure brothel near the Boulevard Sébastopol—not because he desired a career of vice but because he desired to avoid one. He was so frightened of the peculation and moral corruption of the Paris hotels that he preferred to put up in a public institution with whose spiritual and material disadvantages he was relatively familiar. The story is perhaps not true, but it found its way into the papers and so was regarded as being by no means impossible.

So, if for the heart of the great country that surrounds her, Lutèce has no alluring silhouette as have all the other great capitals, London her dome of St. Paul's and her immense sky-line of roofs, or New York her immense cliffs of sky-scrapers, she does remain perpetually on the horizon as a sort of greyish-purple Tophet, an octopus, sucking up the life-juice of a pleasant, helpless land.

It is indeed curious how little of a silhouette Paris makes in the mind, how much of a ground-plan! I do not know of any place seen from which Paris seems to stand up. There is naturally the Eiffel Tower, but that is too spidery to seem august and up to it the buildings do not cluster: there is the dome of the Pantheon, pretty high, but nothing to set against St Peter's or St Paul's or even the Woolworth Building. (I knew I *ought* not to call New York a capital!) Besides the Pantheon is in France, not in Paris. So, say from the steps of the Sacré Cœur at Montmartre, this city seems to lie down, an

obscure huddle of buildings, sufficiently extended but featureless as a whole—like warehouses. But perhaps that is because one is depressed by the preposterously grotesque mosque that there presses on one's back. There may be other heights from which Paris looks august. I do not know them.

The ground-plan of Paris is on the other hand familiar and, as it were, touching . . . the immense egg, intersected by the S of the Seine, with at its heart the island that is the heart of France. For, if the North Side is not France, the Île de la Cité with Notre-Dame, the Sainte Chapelle and the Conciergerie is a Paris that is also France, touching, pleasant, beautiful—the first of all the Glories! And, if Provence be the birthplace, the fountain, of our civilisation, this small Cité, situate as it is on an island in the midst of a river there fordable, on the great Trade Route to the north of the Rhône, is the very funnel through which our civilisation has filtered to us. It contains no financiers except such as sit on the correctional benches of the Palais de Justice.

Around this island goes France, a country singularly united. For in the immense stretches of territory that make up the pleasant land and contain the body politic there are many peoples of vastly differing habits of life but almost no antagonisms between the one and the other, the walnut growers of Grenoble being pleasantly complementary to the vintners of Burgundy and the Norman graziers. Though to ourselves

as Anglo-Saxons the Northern departments may seem as uninteresting as our own lands (I am speaking rather as a traveller), because they are in effect our own lands, that is not so to the French, and all the countries from Brittany to Alsace fuse in very comfortably into one country which is France in its peace and comfort, and its passionate love of the soil.

And indeed, in that even the little Banlieusards, the little commuters, holding season tickets, are at one with the country, having the passion of the trowel, the secator, the pruning knife and the watering pot: and the grotesque little *lotissements* with their odd hutches, cabins, bungalows and watercourses that are spreading out into the marshes on all sides of the capital are a symptom of the fact that, given any remote opportunity, even the French of Paris will idealistically and with bliss dig in the earth and watch things grow. For Paris this is a new development, at any rate on so large a scale, though for the country bourgeois, as for the country bourgeois settled in Paris and retaining his home habits, it is nothing strange. Round every provincial town there is a quarter of summer-houses, tunnels of verdure, statues amongst pampas grass and flowers amongst astonishingly green lettuces and amazingly brilliant tomatoes and egg-plants, vines and haricots. Here on the afternoons of Sundays and fêtes the country shopkeeper and master artisan retire for long siestas in the shade and for a little gardening, in which the whole

family joins, in the evening sunshine. And indeed at quite long distances from Paris itself, most of the really cultivable soil being taken up by the *maraîchers*—the market-gardeners—you used long ago to find and so of course you do still, in increasing numbers, the summer quarters of the Paris small bourgeoisie. In the warm weather many of them will go out there to sleep in the summer-houses.

This is quite a different affair from the *lotissements*—the breaking up of large estates at the hands of companies into tiny plots of from twenty to a hundred yards square, on which the purchasers erect almost every imaginable kind of shelter, from the merest hutches to bungalows of several rooms which if they are not architecturally beautiful are at least very spic and span and very cheerful. For all these things are done with such a zest in France, even round Paris, and there is not anything, under a friendly sun, more innocently gay, than these congeries of odd shapes, the small erections, stretching over the plains as far as the eye can see, separated by no hedges, but the flimsiest fences of split chestnut palings and with sprays of Scotch roses springing from the spinach beds.

And that may well distinguish this population of flimsily sheltered town workers from the Parisien. For they say you can tell at once the house of the Parisien in the country by the fact that, again like us Anglo-Saxons, he must have his flower beds. The moment he hires, buys or

builds a house, and long before he moves in, he will start in to have dug, in the lawns about the house, *parterres*, massifs, and lozenge- or heart-shaped carpet beds and clumps of pampas grass. And he will set up plaster statues of dogs, infants carrying panniers of flowers, oil-jars from which shall depend pink creeping geraniums and the rest of it. The countryman, on the other hand, likes to have his flowers in his vegetable plots, and his statues too, if he has any—preferring to have beautiful things about him where he works in the open. For we are accustomed to deplore the bareness of French villages as compared with those in Hampshire or Devon. But you will find plenty of flowers—and very beautiful specimens—in almost any French village if you know where to look for them—not a riot, but very carefully tended individuals. A Nice carnation grower told me that what differentiated his customers whom he had all over Europe was that the German wanted above all things profusion of blossoms of any kind, the Englishman insisting on the latest novelties, whilst the French content themselves with beautiful specimens of flowers, caring very little whether the varieties be new or very old indeed. These of course are only generalisations, to be taken as a whole, but as such they are true enough. Naturally you will find villages in France—as in England—where no flowers can grow, and equally in Normandy and thereabouts you will find cottages buried under climbing roses and knee-deep in hollyhocks

and marigolds. You will also find *lotissements* round Paris where no flower can live: the purchasers being inexperienced and buying in the summer, were, at any rate in the early days of the movement, only too often cajoled by fraudulent company promoters into buying land that in the winter is under water.

But however disunited Paris, the suburbs, and the departments may be during the spring and summer, two things in the autumn unite every man in France. They are La Pêche and La Chasse! And they indeed must be given capitals. For days before the decreed opening of the shooting season and before the statutory opening of the rivers on the third Sunday in August the whole of France—the *whole* of France!—buzzes like bees swarming. All the papers—but *all*!—are exclusively occupied with articles on how to shoot partridges from every possible angle; how it is necessary to aim at six o'clock of an approaching hare; how to clean guns, scour gentles, cook gudgeon, or what is the really chic attire for the sportsman. My landlord, a rotund paper-hanger, seldom seen save under the festoons of his dim shop on the South Side, then emerges into the full light of the country day. He wears a British officer's tunic with the brass buttons of the Royal Welch, whipcord trousers, enormous galligaskins, a peaked hat with, behind it, a pheasant's tail-feather, for all the world like the head piece of Mephistopheles. Indeed he would do very well indeed for Faust

but for the fact that he carries slung around him a whole arsenal of guns, knives, game-bags, sacks and nets. I believe you put partridges in game-bags, rabbits in sacks and hares in net-bags. And behind this magnificent silhouette grandiloquently gesturing across the sunrise furrows, with its nose to his heel goes an animal exactly resembling a heraldic griffin. . . . And every field contains a boisterous citizen, and as for the noise, the first battle of the Somme was little to it, as being no doubt louder, but certainly not so alarming! For it must be remembered that every field—every field in France from Dunkirk to the Pyrenees on that day in early September will be covered with pellets of flying lead. . . .

And do not be mistaken. These lusty fellows are admirable shots.

The head of game on each little *chasse gardée* may not be huge, but what there is is thinned to the exact margin of prudence—and there are more admirably trained gun-dogs in the department of the Seine-et-Marne than in the whole of the . . . But that would be invidious. For it is to be remembered that this is walking up to partridges over stubble or through sugar-beet. . . . It may take better shooting to hit the neck of one driven pheasant out of ten thousand all rocketing: but the all-round sport here called for is by no means contemptible. By no means.

And the jollity, the lustiness, the shouting, the packed roadside inns and the glorious, if small, displays of fur and feathers on all the lunch-

tables! You may be reminded of Mr. Pickwick and his companions if you like, but you might be reminded of worse people—and a nation that can provide for its whole democracy so much expansion, so much frugal footwork over the stubbles and hearty gaiety within the hostelries need not . . . Well, the exordium may be left to the reader.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOU

La Pêche as practised in France is usually a sport very little sportive. It is none the less *passionnant*—impassioning: there is no word for that in English. The other Saturday I—*moi qui vous parle!*—took with rod and line the only dace in a certain river. I do not say that it was the only fish, for I have heard that another has since been caught . . . in the sunlight, between the rushes, with the cows coming down to drink and, on the edge, the washerwomen kneeling to cudgel clothes on boards, beneath an enormously high sky, with many grey willows, in the sluggish, very deep, winding river.

A committee of experts in that punt sat on that delicate, shining, green-and-silver fish. They pronounced unanimously, in turn, that it was: (A) a gudgeon; (B) a perch; (C) a young pike; (D) a bream. It was as long as my little finger. Finally, amidst an impressed silence the Expert of Experts spoke the unshakable verdict; it was a young sardine! . . . As a matter of fact it was a dace; but since I do not know the French for that fish, apparently foreign to French waters, I had said it was a rainbow trout—*truite arc-*

en-ciel! My words were received politely but without conviction. *Truites arc-en-ciel*, said they unanimously, will not live in French waters.

Now, by a singular coincidence, this Sunday all the papers on their sports page announce with headlines as large as are to be found in France, that a M.P. . . . in the presence of a committee consisting of MM. Q.; de R....; S. de T....; U.-V.... and X...., caught and duly landed beside the Pont-Neuf in the heart of Paris—a rainbow trout of the handy weight of 300 grammes—over half a pound. The catch was all the more impressive in that the trout, having taken a former fly, had broken the line, only to take another five minutes later. Four other rainbow trout have also been reported as taken with rod and line in the Seine at Paris, this week. (See the *Intransigeant* under date Sunday, 13th August 1925.) . . . I find this a little disturbing.

That no one in France, including the bank managers, should know anything about the laws of so platonic a matter as banking need trouble no one. But that the practitioners, spectators and all the chroniclers for the Press of this impassioning art (one need not bother about the State Establishments of Fresh-Water Pisciculture or the scientists, for they naturally would know nothing about the subject!) should with no uncertain voice and during many years declare that *truites arc-en-ciel* will not live in French waters—that seems disturbing when, in addition,

five rainbow trout of unknown origin are caught in one week beneath the shadow of the Exhibition of Decorative Arts ! . . . But I suppose it does not really matter.

With regard to my dace. . . . During the discussion it died in the bottom of the punt. A little girl fed it for the rest of the afternoon with *asticots*, carried it to the inn, at dinner put it to swim in her clear soup, carried it many miles in her hand in an automobile, through the night between the illuminated poplar trunks, and, finally, votively, laid it at the foot of the statue of Our Lady that looks down upon her slumbers. There, still shining it spread glamour through her dreams. It being gone in the morning she declared that Le Petit Jésus who comes to watch over her as soon as she sleeps had carried it up to add to the shining glories of the floor of Heaven !

Since then, at every appropriate moment she exclaims :

" Mon père a pris un poisson à Crécy ! ! ! c'était le seul qui a été pris ! c'était énorme . . . c'était gr.r.and ! G.R.R.RAND ! comme ca ! " and, stretching her arms as if she were about to fly, she brings her hands together until the forefingers delicately extended indicate a space . . . well, not quite twice as long as the real dimension of that fish.

So early, in this happy country, do the habits and the passions of anglers the world over develop themselves !

You may say that no passion can equal that of the dry-fly enthusiast of Anglo-Saxondom, if it be not that of his opponent the advocate of the other method. Reading the columns of the *Field* in the old days : of the rings rising near the rushes at dusk and the glorious taking of the big one that had lain for years contemptuous in the shadows of the alders—though to be sure the big ones are usually taken by small boys with grasshoppers. . . . Still, reading those columns (I wonder if there is still a *Field* !) one used to be conscious of a strong glamour—a strong glamour made up of twilights, of silence, of white glimmers on be-misted mirrors. . . . Well, English poetry, you know !

And it *is* just that ! . . . Something remote from life, except for the very few : the yearning of a race living in offices for something afar. A little regretful. You say, uncertain that your office will ever again let you go : " Do you remember, in nineteen hundred and nine, at Fordingbridge Weir ? "

But that is as different from the strong, virulent passion of the French for the quayside, the punt, the hamper and the sunlight as is dusk from high noon. So extraordinarily different. For, in France everybody fishes, down to the little girls of five. And every Frenchman has water at his door. There are everywhere quays, and you might as well in a drought try to keep Australian cattle from trying to stampede to a river, as to keep the French from their sweet waters. It is

of course tried, for in France as elsewhere there is always someone to try to keep someone else from doing something agreeable or *passionnant*. This year it has been the Government.

There was, that is to say, this year something singular about the second Sunday in August, and the anglers—as who should say the French nation in her majesty—got it into their heads that the astronomical second Sunday was the moral third! The responsible minister stuck to the astronomical view: had there been a general election that ministry would have fallen, for you had better by far get between France and any of the glories of her past than between the northerly French and their *matelote d'anguilles* or the central French and their trenchers of scarlet crayfish! But, in August there is no means of getting at the legislature, which is not in session, deputies and senators being amongst their constituents. So the nation just fished! And as the *gardes champêtres*, water-bailiffs and *agents* could not arrest the whole population, they either stopped in bed or kept away from the banks of streams; and the papers reported that all was quiet on the Marne.

No judge anyhow would have convicted anyone!

For, when it comes to *la pêche* any French bench can turn itself into a tribunal of Solomons. You say for instance that there is a law, aimed at preventing the setting of night lines, that prohibits fishing after dark. And indeed there

is. It works like this: two sportsmen of my neighbourhood were taken by water-bailiffs before the magistrates and charged with fishing very late indeed—one hour and twelve and a half minutes after astronomical sunset, legal darkness being presumed to begin one hour after sunset. In another case it was alleged against a defendant that he had fished in physical darkness. The first judge dismissed his case with the remark that, in all broad France with its millions of sundials, pocket-pieces, chronometers, station clocks, church clocks and other instruments for recording time, no single one had ever been found to agree with another to within so paltry a space of time as twelve and a half minutes: the other judge—a Solomon indeed!—pointed out that convictions for fishing after physical darkness had set in were *ipso facto* impossible. For the definition of physical darkness is that it is darkness so complete as to prevent your perceiving the actions of another. If then it was as dark as that on the occasion alleged against the defendant the prosecution could not have seen what he was doing and, alternatively, if they could see what he was doing it was not dark and . . . case dismissed.

It is that spirit that makes fishing in France an affair so national—that and the fact that the gudgeon or its substitute is worth at the present rate of exchange almost exactly a sou, whilst it has always represented a fraction of the value of that national unit of currency. You will be told

that the French reckon in centimes and francs. Do not believe it : they reckon in sous, a hundred sous being the highest figure in currency that they can contemplate with equanimity. It is indeed forbidden by law to reckon in the older currency, four hundred sous being a louis and so royalist. But if you go into a post office and ask for one stamp at thirty, two at twenty, and one at five centimes, the clerk will take a very blunt-pointed blue pencil and a sheet of paper and will write down :

30
20
20
5

He will run his pencil once or twice up and down that column and then, giving up the attempt at addition, will say :

" Enfin . . . fifteen sous ! "

But it is quite possible that if you ask—as I always do—for stamps at six or twenty sous the clerk will remember that he is a Functionary of the Republic and will call your attention to the fact that you are infringing a law in a public edifice. All the same he cannot *think* in francs and centimes ; he never could ; no human being ever could. But the smallest child in France can do in his head the most difficult sums in sous and hundreds of sous. And the fact that that is the case has the profoundest influence on the French character : for five francs is nothing, but cent sous is a hell of a lot of money. I assure you

that that is so! And when it comes to two or four hundred sous you arrive at regions almost unthinkable.

We were talking, however, of fishing—or rather of the laying of night lines. Heaven forbid that one should side—in the *abstract*!—with poachers, the scoundrels who make . . . what is it? sport? . . . what is it? . . . unprofitable? No: surely not that! But I once heard a British Cabinet Minister, and not on the Left Side either, say:

"Hang it all, I'd rather be an agricultural labourer with eighteen bob a week and a cottage and a bit of garden for parsnips, and a poached rabbit now and then when he was so minded, and a hare when he was in luck than . . ." I forget who the other fellow of the comparison was—a bank clerk, I think; but the early part of the sentence riveted itself on my mind because the speaker was a fairly keen game-preserver and the company, all of the game-preserving class, all sniggered with a sort of unholy pleasure at the idea of the labourer knocking over a hare. Very likely they had all done it as boys. There is much the same spirit here, though since there are very few big preserves that tolerance attaches less to game than to river-fish. I mean that if a man has only about twenty hares on his tiny shoot he rather wants them for himself, whereas the rivers, which are mostly leased to big associations, are regarded as fairer game—so the laying of night lines is a rather admired sport.

I understand that as an occupation it feels like this :

To-night there is a little bit of a soft moon. Now our regimental quickstep—over these very downs, too !—was : *For 'tis my delight of a shiny night at the season of the year*, the tune of the Lincolnshire Poacher, and we used once, heaven help us, to shoot pheasants in trees with Morris-tubed rifles ! And the Marne is not so distant : just a step or so over a roll of the downs by a sunken footway. Nothing in the world would persuade us to take fish illegally from the awfully preserved waters of the Stour—*any* Stour or Ouse or Kennet or Avon. Throne and Constitution might totter before that or before that we should shoot foxes. Besides, *shouldn't* we get it in the neck from the Bench if we tried it on !

But here. . . . Consider the soft September night ! To be out in it. . . . To be out in it with an object in being flagitiously, mysteriously there ! . . . Besides, we know a place between two willows. Listen to the cock-pheasant going away through the dripping beech boughs. Well, he is meat for our landlord. The water is very white beneath the mist ; very, very black between the rushes. A good, coarse, be-hooked line feels good in the hand. And a *brochet* cooked as it shall be in our kitchen is not to be despised ; nor for the matter of that is *matelote* of eels, though personally I cannot swallow them any more than I can chevaline beef. And the *garde fluviale* that we know is *bon enfant*, and even if

we fall before another who isn't, there will always be the amiable magistrate! One would say . . . Oh, that one was *poète*; or how different this was from life in the trenches; or one would say that one's regimental quickstep had been what it was. . . . Or if none of that moved him one would allege that one's *bonne amie* had an urge—a midnight yearning—towards pike cooked with bay-leaves, fennel, pepper-corns, red, red wine—and the secret ingredient. So it would be a *crime passionnel*! . . . Oh, dear, all this happened long, long ago!

Anyhow, these, I am told, are the emotions and expedients of those setting night lines in this country. And then there is another glamour. The *brochet* will save you four hundred, the *anguilles* two hundred, sous from your weekly butcher's bill!

Now it must be understood that this stands not merely for glamour but also for rectitude: I mean the economy, not the poaching! For the French not only despise waste: they regard it with contempt as being a clumsiness of the mind—as if indeed the passion for waste were truly an unnatural vice rather than an imbecility. The waste from an English—and I am frequently told from an American—working man's cottage will fatten two pigs; in my French cottage with a population of four I cannot get enough scrap-food to feed a dog. And I know what I am talking about, for both in the north and in the south of England I have had experience of pig-

feeding. Indeed, both in England and in France it has been my duty to prevent regimental waste of food by troops on active service—an occupation designed for the checkmating of pig-breeders. For the English pig is very largely nourished on household scraps of rural districts or regiments—and speaking as a pig-breeder it is my pride to think that, if in nothing else, my country unapproachably surpasses France in the quality of her pork! But speaking as an economist it is my pride to be able to say that in one regiment at least we so got rid of the element of waste that the local pig-breeders refused to give as much as a shilling for a forty-gallon cask of swill.

It was in this way that my attention was called to a side of life usually little considered, but one on which the very existence of humanity now begins to depend.

Well, I once had occasion to point out to a young company commander in a British regiment that he would be in very serious danger of a court-martial if any more bread were found in his swill-tubs. He had received frequent reprimands from Orderly Room. Yet apart from that he was as good a company commander as you could find—almost the best I have ever known.

After that strafe was over I walked away with him from his company towards the mess—and no bread after that was ever found in his swill-tubs. He was a very nice, serious, tall, fair,

bronzed boy—about twenty-eight. And he took me with real pain to task because he considered that what I was doing was undermining the manhood of His Majesty's Army. He said that he had hitherto chanced the Orderly Room strafes because he could not bring—he *could* not bring himself to order his men not to indulge in the open-handed pastime of chucking bread about, or to enjoin upon his cooks to be so un-British as to attend to the saving of fat from the washing-up water. He knew that fats were urgently needed for the manufacture of High Explosives, but High Explosives were of no use if the moral of your men were upset. He said that it was open-handed generosity that had made England what it was.

I cordially agreed and pointed out that it had also gone a long way to making the world what it then was—in 1917. But that he did not follow.

Now let the reader imagine the mixed nature of my feelings when later, (A) as publicist, and (B) as a private breeder of pigs, I bought from neighbouring cottagers their household waste for one penny the bucket. I remember that the tribute of food for one day from one cottage, the family consisting of father, mother, one son aged eighteen, and one son aged eight—this tribute included a piece of cheese that weighed at least a pound and a half, three-quarters of a two-pound cake, a great number of cooked potatoes, a huge quantity of pea-shucks and four enormous mutton chops, from which only

the rounds of meat had been, as it were, nibbled —and of course bread galore! None of that family could abide fat nohow. So, though as publicist I felt sick, as pig-breeder my emotions acted as a corrective.

Now I do not mean to say that my nets always brought up such pearls or whales—or indeed that that was an average pailful for that family. No doubt some fortuitous circumstance had brought all those ingredients together on one day, and indeed it is only fair to say that my pig-man regarded that collection of food almost with awe. But you would always find some of those ingredients in all the waste food of all the cottages round . . . and the housewife from whom that bucketful had come was by no means regarded as a slattern: she was hard-working, clean, extremely energetic and respected.

But the point to be made is that *in no* French family would you find wasted any one of those foodstuffs. Not any one. And *no* French family lives so badly as that English household—so dully, with such a monotony of badly-cooked and uninvitingly presented food. In France it would not have been the bread, the cake, the cheese or the mutton fat that would have been thrown away into the swill-bucket—it would have been the housewife. . . . Why, in France even the pea-shucks are used as the basis of an admirable soup. After that they are given to the chickens.

It has been said—I do not know that I did

not first say it myself!—that the late war was caused by the British habit of not looking at change in restaurants, and, although there is more than one reason why in England one has that habit, the allegation is not without that glimmer of truth that often underlies epigrams. The Englishman is—or perhaps it is only was—of so godlike a habit that he can ignore change for anything less than a sovereign from waiters and others; moreover, he wishes you to see that so superior are the establishments that he usually frequents that no waiter or other attendant there employed would so much as think of giving short change; so having acquired the habit he cannot get out of it in other lands where inferior beings who are in the habit of fingering and examining every pfennig on the tablecloth or adding up with a blue pencil every centime—where, in short, the lesser breeds without the law see him eating. This then breeds hatred, and, later, a determination to be able to do likewise, in the carrying out of which resolve lethal weapons come to be employed. (I have frequently heard too, as regards the other branch of Anglo-Saxondom, that so even superiorly godlike are its members that no citizen of that Republic would cheat you of less than three thousand dollars; indeed I have never been cheated of less myself when in the United States; but as I never count my change I may be mistaken in that!)

But indeed there is another reason in the

domain of thought that occupies itself with the avoidance of armed conflicts—another reason why we should be grateful to a race that is careful of the sou and what it will buy: this planet is limited in extent; the amount of land on it that can be employed in the production of food is also limited, but the human race multiplies with frightful rapidity. If then Anglo-Saxondom, with the lesser breeds hot in imitation and pursuit, continues on its godlike career of open-handedly pouring good food by the daily million barrelfuls down the sewers—for the waste food of the great cities does not even go to please the pigs!—we must at no very protracted date come to an Armageddon that may at last adjust the balance, if there is anything left to balance with. For it is to be remembered that all wars in the end, save for dynastic wars which may now be neglected as factors, are wars for food or for territory on which food may be grown easily and with profit. That is one of the endless lessons that are taught by Provence. And the inscription on the bib that as a child I wore, and that I still remember as one of my most intimate furnishings, had far better been: WASTE NOT, WAR NOT than what it actually was.

I may, I hope, take it as an axiom that the one subject in which humanity to-day universally interests itself is the avoidance of war, and with that I come, as must now be manifest, to the subject of this work. Civilisation, then—*our* European civilisation of white races can only be

saved, as an affair at all satisfactory, by thought and by character. Labour-saving machinery will not do it, nor white-tiled sanitary arrangements, nor will any of the things that Anglo-Saxondom has contributed towards the undoing of mankind. Our civilisation was born on the shores of the Mediterranean and was the frame of mind of no conquering people: its symbol is not the automobile, the elaborate bathroom, the submarine, the aeroplane—or even the steam-plough. Its symbol is simply . . . the *sou*.

Take flowers. By mass production you can raise an infinite number of pelargoniums, petunias, polyanthuses and, for the matter of that, of primroses. But these are coloured vegetables, not flowers. A flower is a frail, somewhat imperfect, charming thing that you pick or allow to grow in your own bit of land or along a hedge.

To have in one's rooms one's own flowers, to have at table one's own fruit, one's own ducks, fowls and other small meats—that is the highest happiness a man can know: a happiness of conquest over the stubborn earth and the inimical weather. When amidst such flowers you sit down to table and sharpen your knife you are not only preparing to assimilate nourishment, you are a conqueror at a celebration, and, as you raise to your lips a glass of the small, pure wine that your uncle sends you—wine that is grown somewhere in Anjou in the small vineyard that still is in your family—you are toasting yourself

very gloriously for the fine, fortunate fellow that you certainly are. So at least thinks the Frenchman, even if Fortune forces him to raise his rabbit on a *lotissement* eight miles only from the Arc de Triomphe. He has conquered.

It is the relic of that feeling that inspires the Frenchman's moiety when, careful sous in hand, she bargains every morning at the market-stalls along the pavement. A cabbage bought at a standard price in a " shop " or in a department store is only the loathsome thing that, presently, greenly swimming in tepid cabbage-water, will appear upon a monotonously nauseating board amongst food out of tin cans. But a cabbage for which you have bargained vindictively for the best part of ten minutes, that you have felt over, tapped, shaken at your ear, that lies before you rejected on the stall what time you relieve your feelings in elaborately rhetorical French running so deliciously off the tongue, the magic words *c'est honteux* recurring again and again like the burden of a pantoum . . . ah, such a cabbage won at the cost of a life-and-death struggle for four sous less is fit to be glorified with the bacon and slices of sausage and the partridge that ultimately recline upon its succulence. It is the parsley crown of the Olympic athlete.

And your victory also has the flavour of a victory over Nature, slugs, weather! For the market-woman whose failings during that bargaining you so incisively uncovered to all the standers-by, has fingers and the wrinkles of her

dried cheeks ingrained with the real soil of the garden; for that cabbage she has fought with Nature and the rest and, driving her trotting donkey in past the Lion de Belfort to the Boulevard Port-Royal and the stall opposite the maternity hospital, beneath the plane trees and in the shadow of the admirably be-whiskered marble surgeon with a beautiful naked lady writhing round his boots—driving in past the Lion de Belfort still wreathed with the morning mists, that cultivatrix was coming to fell defeat at your hands. In your day you have lived in Auvergne and your fathers have grown cabbages for sale, so you know how great is her mortification. . . . She has conquered Nature, your bow and spear have subdued *her*.

That at least is your feeling of the victorious moment: it will subside gradually into a pleasant glow of remembered contest, of a long, a life-long series of sporting events. For, for you, the real Frenchwoman, your sport, the only and legitimate sport is the *chasse au sou*. And, though with the admirable flow of your correct, lucid and Academic phrases you may have seemed to deprive that market-woman of all claim to the very title of woman, you know, in the bottom of your heart and after the contest has ended, that she, like yourself, is also an admirable mother engaged on that to which with a life-long clarion sound her honour calls her. Her honour. . . . For you are pretty well aware, also at the bottom of your heart, that that dealeress has made two sous

more than her real bottom price out of you, though you have got the cabbage for four sous less than her first quotation. Twice you threw down the cabbage and made to move off : if you had really moved off might she not have pursued you to the charcuterie stall with the cabbage in her extended hand, ready to let you have it for two sous less than you eventually gave ? But your nerve would not quite carry you that length.

Thus, altogether, six sous have been saved by that agreeable six rounds of argument, four by you and two by the market-woman ; France is by that much the richer, and by so much the careers of your son who is to be apprenticed to a technical engineer, and of *her* son who is studying for the law, are advanced. . . . Look at it. . . . This morning your man who is off work, perhaps because of a one-day strike ordered by the G.C.T.U., or perhaps because it is Sunday, or perhaps because he just feels like not taking down the shutters of his watch-repairing hut—your man then who is off work . . . (Never, by the by, will he be out of work : in the whole republic of France only 796 men this week have applied for out-of-work relief) . . . will have gone to the dark corner and have regarded his fishing can and his bamboo pole. And you—for you are a wife as wise as good !—will have patted him on the shoulder saying : " Yes, go, my brave, and bring us home an admirable fry-of-gudgeon for our lunch of the fork. . . ."

And he will do it : by half past eleven he will be back from the Quai d'Anjou with an admirable *friture* swimming in his can—just-born rainbow trout, miniature char, minnows, eels, sticklebacks, dace and positively a gudgeon ! And his black fit will be gone. And with four sous' worth of potatoes—four *saved* sous' worth !—and frying-fat saved from Sunday's *pot-au-feu*, there is an admirable *pièce de résistance* for your lunch of the fork. And costing nothing. Nothing. . . . With a sou's worth of watercress, three sous' of Brie cheese, three sous' bread, three sous' worth of coffee, and all the cooking done with broken cigar boxes given you by your daughter who is married to the proprietor of a *débit de tabac* . . . and there is half the food of yourself and your good man for the day at a cost of ten sous ! . . . If you had gone to a restaurant—or even to a bistrot—Just Heavens ! there would have been . . . It is shameful ! . . . two couverts, ten sous ; two friture de goujons, forty sous ; bread, six sous ; a quarter carafe of rouge, twenty sous ; cheese of Brie, one portion for two, fifteen sous. . . . C'est honteux ! Hont*eux* ! . . . And . . . but abominable ! . . . twenty sous for coffee ! How can they look honest folk in the face ! . . . Hello, Mister the Patron, how dare you charge . . . But he is not listening. . . . And, yes, my brave old one, you must have a *fine* to chase away the black fit ! It is only reasonable. . . . But, oh, my dead mother ! twenty-two sous for a *fine* ! is it nectar the beverage of the gods with

which they provide one in this palace of Louis the Fourteenth ?

Let us now examine the addition ! Ten ! Forty ! Six ! Fifteen ! Twenty ! ! ! ! What is that twenty for, my brave girl ! For coffee ! Mon brave, unhook my collarette : I suffocate ! . . . Yes, Suzanne, I know it is not your fault : I can read it on the carte ! None the less it is honteux ! Twenty-two sous ! Twenty-two ! ! ! Hello, Mister the Patron, are you without shame ? But he is still not listening !

Let us now add ! . . . Fifty : two francs zero zero : thirty : seventy-five : one franc zero zero again . . . c'est hont . . . one franc ten. . . . Oh, my heart. . . . Five seventy-five. . . . One hundred and fifteen sous ! Is it imaginable ? What would our fathers have said !

And then there is ten per cent. for the service. . . . Eleven and a half sous ! Well, the poor must live ! George, give her fifteen sous. She is a brave girl and has a little son in Béziers whom she desires to educate as a surgeon. He took his communion in white satin. Yes, yes, my girl ! On les fait en rigolant . . . and then all life is a struggle afterwards to elevate them to their station ! That is true ! It is life that !

That is what it might have been ! As it is, with the saved four sous and the friture that father and mother have had their midday dinner for five pence ! They have saved one hundred and twenty sous. ONE HUNDRED . . . AND . . . TWENTY S O U S ! All that to go towards the

career of their son after he has served his apprenticeship and come to the difficult embarking on life! It is that which is fine, it is that which is most honourable, it is that which is most touching in France.

And it is that which produces the Thought and the Arts of this country. For without that desperate honourability, that tremendous realisation of the power that is behind that unit of money, without those parents with their immense respect, precisely, for Thought and the Arts, without the amazing education that is its final product, there could be no Sorbonne, no Beaux Arts, no Latin Quarter, no South Side of the River to be the centre of our civilisation. There could be no population for those places, no books, no surgeons, no Thought. . . . Nothing! . . . France would be just another Anglo-Saxondom.

For it must be understood that the pay of the young learned or the young artist in France is so miserably low that if the peasant and the small bourgeois populations had not an almost fanatical respect for those making immaterial careers there could be no such careers.

The pay—the standard pay—for two pages of one of the most famous reviews of France is fourteen francs—say half a crown, or sixty cents. It is a very closely printed page, so it is as if you should be paid ten pence or twenty cents per page for writing an ordinary novel of thirty-three lines to the page and ten words to the line. You might thus receive about ten pounds for a novel

and make about thirty pounds if you could write three novels a year. No one could do it. Yet the admirable and old periodical of which I am speaking gets its contributions not from the merely young, but from writers of very established positions and possessed of the most excruciating ranges of learning.

Upon the products of such emoluments, it is obvious, neither the most meagre of unknown men nor the most diaphanous of great professors could possibly live. The difference is made up by the mothers of France watching over every sou that goes out and over every sou that comes in. The Frenchwoman, then, who so watches maintains her self-respect; the Frenchwoman who does not is esteemed and esteems herself as something lower than, say, a prostitute.

For indeed, to the fullest sense of the expression, the word self-respect is the word here to emphasize, and if a Frenchwoman failed in this duty she might as well go slatternly. I really believe that French public opinion would consider that a clean and careful prostitute is less of a public enemy than the mother of a family who cannot do her ordering exactly to her family needs.

To the Anglo-Saxon this sounds hateful. In the first place it is immoral; in the second, we come to this country to live on the cheap—on the incredibly mean cheap. And this is true of even the rich amongst us. For the American millionaire who drunkenly throws banknotes about the brothels of the other side, or the rich English

woman who will send a couple of hundred-franc notes to the conductor of a small orchestra that is playing classical music with the request that he will cease that and give us a little jazz—they *do* that!—will scream with rage or rumble volcanically for an hour over the price of some small article bought from a poor person, or at the bare living wage demanded by some poor amanuensis picked up on this side of the water. . . .

That is Us. And then we go home and grumble for days and days over the sous we could not steal and over the hatefulness of the French.

This is loose writing, but it is meant to be. The point of view wants putting—and it seems more expedient to put it loosely and then to ram it home with instances than to start with the instances and then state the moral.

Here, then, is an instance. I heard only yesterday a lady complain bitterly of the dishonesty of the French. She was not a *very* rich woman, for I do not know any very rich women or men very well. But she was rich—with a larger income in francs than that, say, of the President of the French Republic. Well, she had been to see some show of an athletic nature, outside inner Paris, and returning, in a small street of a poor quarter, her car was blocked outside a small fruiterer's shop. What was her delight to observe there exposed for sales apples of a type of which she was rapturously fond—and at a price less than half she was accustomed to pay near the Arc de

Triomphe. France at last was justified of her existence.

She incontinently purchased all that she could, but whilst the parcel was being done up a dog-fight or some sort of fight—I forget what—arose in the street outside. She went out to witness this. When she arrived at her home in the Étoile Quarter and opened her parcel she found, not the yellow apples of her desire—I never can remember their name—but, as she phrased it, filthy rubbish!

I cannot render the rage that, even at the remembrance, that lady expressed. She called down lightning on all the land from Dunkirk to St Jean de Luz and naturally declared that her country in the late hostilities ought to have taken the side it didn't. She said that, so enraged was she, that she had at once ordered her car to return to that distant and mean street and had uttered to the fruiteress the home-truths—all of them—adumbrated above.

"And what do you think," she exclaimed, finishing her anecdote, "*what* do you think the person answered? She was quite calm and simply said: 'Well, you weren't looking'!"

I do not suppose the moral of this needs underlining. The indignation expressed by the lady was probably surpassed by the contempt that the fruiteress felt for a woman who preferred witnessing a dog-fight to seeing her parcel done up—and it is to be remembered that she lived amongst a teeming population every soul of which would

examine microscopically every apple which was purchased and which prides itself on not being outwitted, so that it is the duty of the fruiteress to outwit the customer if possible. Without that half the fun of the game would be gone—as if your opponent in the ring should lie down and hold up his paws. And of course the fruiteress was ignorant of the fact that the visit of a charming lady of a dominant race in a motor-car and all ought to be regarded as the coming of an angel or other supernatural being bringing with it all sorts of unrealisable blessings and rendering that dark spot of the earth for ever a little brighter. She did not know that she would be expected to tell her children's children how one day she had been privileged to talk to an Anglo-Saxon lady. The French do not look at it like that.

We are apt to. Mild, adoring, black, yellow or coffee-coloured races, easily massacred with machine-guns, being no longer to be found the world over to kneel down and give us something—everything—for nothing, we nowadays, with the benefit of an exchange which we consider more unfailing than the Hotchkisses and Krupps of other days, regard our coinages as our ancestors used to regard the glass beads for which the black indigenous parted with arm-rings of solid gold. It is time we changed our point of view, for the European will not adore us but regards us as the stupid ogres of past days were regarded by intelligent dwarfs. And it is our vagueness towards money and what money will and will not do

that is regarded with contempt by these peoples who centre rather on the Mediterranean than on the Atlantic.

The Frenchman hunts the sou because the sou will send his son to the Sorbonne and purchase for himself certain solaces, but knowing enough of life to be aware of the intellectual limits to the power of money he has no mystical or mystified reverence for the large fortune as such. If he were told that the richest man in America was walking down his street he would not so much as go to the window.

The Anglo-Saxon on the other hand with his immense power of being dazzled by "records" has for large amassments of invisible wealth a reverence that completely precludes any consideration of what money can do for the individual. Money for us is Power—but only the power that enables this or that individual to form rings for the acquiring of more wealth, to influence possibly general elections in a sense that shall make the forming of such rings or the cornering of other commodities more easy. I fancy that if you could catch an Anglo-Saxon unaware and therefore unhypocritical and that if you asked him what is the most striking evidence of the civilisation that spans the Atlantic he would answer that it is the large fortune. Before that all other glamours fail—the aeroplane, the wireless telegraph, the white-tiled bathroom . . . all of them. If on the other hand you asked him what he—he—individually expected to get out of it he would

at his most hypocritical be fairly vague. He would be clothed by the most expensive tailor without much regard to what the most expensive tailor made him look like; he would eat at the most expensive restaurant without much knowledge of food, and drink the most expensive wines without much being able to tell one wine from another; he would have a large house with the most expensive furniture without getting much comfort out of his house or any taste for one style of furniture against another. He would indulge in sport as sport without much idea of rendering himself more beautiful or more of a good companion. His scheme of life would include occasional entertainments which would cost him a gratifyingly large sum and occasional debauches during which he would only very indifferently savour the pleasures that can be obtained from music, women and alcohol. He would be a little more definite about his motor-cars, his domestic labour-saving appliances, his lavatories and his bathrooms. He would put a certain idealism into obtaining a record number of all these, but for everything else he would be merely vague until, brightening up, he would return to his office and the study of how to form always larger and always more powerful, and again always larger and again always more powerful, rings. And, vaguely, he would have at the back of his head the idea that because these rings mean more and more massed production he was contributing more towards the glories of civilisation than

Shakespeare, Descartes and Dante—or, if you like, Napoleon.

I heard the other day of a gentleman who formed the scheme of cornering all the Revue business of Europe. He engaged therefore a large number of young women in New York and came over to Paris intending to buy one of the larger theatres in a week in order to open before Christmas. He arrived in Paris on the 11th November, 1923. On the 1st of November, 1924 he had concluded the negotiations for the purchase of that place of entertainment. The former proprietor in offering him his congratulations mentioned that the old lady who farmed the cabinets de toilette had a twelve years' lease of them. "That," said our friend, "will be easily settled. It is indispensable that we should have all the most modern of improvements." The sexes must be segregated; over gorgeous white tiles water must dash with the rush of Niagara so that the sound of advancing civilisations should fill the air. Approached, the old lady said very slowly, very sadly and very, very firmly:

"Monsieur, je ne peux pas!"—Sir, I cannot.

"Come, come!" said our conqueror rustling his cheque book. "Money talks. Name your price."

The lady said:

"Monsieur, je ne peux pas!"

"Now," said the purchaser, "name any reasonable price you like and I will add twenty-five per cent. to it."

The lady said :

" Monsieur, je suis veuve de guerre ! "—I am a war-widow.

He asked :

" What has that got to do with it ? Name any price—*any* price and I will double it."

She said :

" J'ai perdu mon mari et mes deux fils en mille neuf cent quatorze. Et qu'est-ce que je ferais de mes soirs ? "—She had lost her husband and both her sons in 1914. Besides, what should she do with her evenings ?

He declared he would build her a house in the suburbs and hire for life a couple of gardeners. She said :

" Monsieur, c'est mon métief ! " as who should say that that was her craft or mystery, and then gaining a little animation she finished :

" Monsieur, je ne peux pas. Je ne peux pas. Tous mes souvenirs sont dans mes cabinets. . . . Et puis . . . j'ai mes clients favoris ! "

So he folded up his cheque book and retired to his home across the water.

CHAPTER VII

"VIVENT LES FEMMES . . ."

THE singular—and surely heroic—adventurer into the capital of France who saw chalked up on the walls of that city the words "VIVENT LES FEMMES!" expresses his astonishment at an aspiration so superfluous, since women will anyhow go on living. But since the same Anglo-Saxon observer suggests that the spreading of tails by peacocks in the Jardin des Plantes should be suppressed in order that the blushes of English and Americans may be spared, we may take it that he is so heroically out of sympathy with Gallic light-heartedness—if Gallic light-heartedness there be—that we need not be astonished at *him*. The reader may not understand: when peacocks spread their tails before the indifferent hens, that is a gesture of courting. Our Anglo-Saxon friend thinks that all gestures of courting should be suppressed in public places that might be visited by Anglo-Saxons. He appeals to the French authorities to have all the screen-feathers of their peacocks amputated in the interests of the Entente Cordiale or something like that.

Obviously sturdiness is a virtue: if you have neither grace nor light, nor life, nor art, nor

knowledge, you may well fall back on sturdiness of mind—but the real problem of modern life is how to get women to keep all on going, so that our friend may well be considered as being a little in a backwater. The Frenchwoman is probably as indifferent to the inscription *Vivent les Femmes* as is the pea-hen to the sapphire, quivering, thousand eyes of her lord, yet she might not go on considering domestic life as an art if chalk or feathers did not now and then meet her eye.

We exist as twin civilisations a little removed above the stage of brutes—because France exists. France exists because her women treat the handling of domestic life as if it were an art. So we are here—intellectually !—on the sufferance of the sou, and perhaps if that inscription were not found here and there on the walls of France we might be blown-out candle flames.

Someone once said that the mistake made by the visitor to France was not to see that the French are of all races round the Mediterranean the most Latin and the most inveterately so. The Italian will work if you bribe him to work ; the Spaniard will allow you to work and will look on good-naturedly whilst you are at it. The Frenchman will neither work nor let you work. That is true.

But that commentator omitted to define what he meant by "work." He meant the sort of work that is performed by gentlemen who found limited companies for the standardisation of the

necessaries of material existence or for the increase of the speed of transport from place to place. The Frenchman does not want these things—and he does not want these things because the Frenchwoman does not. Nor is this feminine influence merely contemporary, still more strongly is it inherited. The Frenchman—I am not speaking of the Parisien—will not have a vacuum cleaner, say, in his house not merely because his wife or mistress as the case may be will not have it, but also because a profound distrust of everything not performed by hand was instilled into him by his mother and by both his grandmothers behind her.

And it is to be remembered that romance still, in France, attaches to hand work. If he lets you into his house at all the Frenchman will let you in as willingly at nine o'clock in the morning as at a later hour, and there you shall see madame, whether wife or mistress, in the salon, habited in an overall of white hollands, her head not at all undainty in a knotted bandanna handkerchief, wielding a feather brush on the hundred bibelots, statues, Muses, tapestries and mantel-clocks. And she will continue at her occupation, only pausing to give a new order as one servant or another enters to say that such and such a task is completed. Never for a moment will she say, "Oh, Mr. *Ford*, how dreadful that you should find me in such a state!" And, what is tender and pretty is the pride with which monsieur regards and exhibits her to you. It is perhaps

the most romantic aspect of the relationship of the sexes in this country. But then . . . it *is* romantic ; you have a *ménage* in harmony—and how many such are there ?

So the vacuum cleaner, which may here stand as a symbol, is fairly eschewed in France, and the Frenchwoman, the Frenchman following her, has a settled distrust of all labour-saving appliances. It is comprehensible. If you clean a thing yourself with a duster the thing itself is close under your eyes all the time, and you see specks and dust going satisfyingly away ; but if you apply suction at a distance of three feet, however clean the treated object may subsequently appear, you have not seen the dust going. It is the same with things out of tins.

I do not know what the consumption all France over of canned beef may be, but I have never spoken to a Frenchwoman about domestic matters without being told that canned beef is poisonous—and I have spoken to a good many, and the same applies to almost all forms of canned meat and fish foods. Seasonal vegetables of course you must preserve, for who would go from November to May without *petits pois* ? But having yourself preserved innumerable *petits pois* you can trust your judgment infallibly to detect, if, being in circumstances which prevent your doing any preserving yourself, the *petits pois* which you purchase have not been put down exactly after the recipe given you by your grandmother.

And this partly explains the large proportion that restaurant life assumes amongst a people so domesticated. If you observe French couples in restaurants, every now and then you will see a husband and wife eating, their heads close together and a little on one side. As they masticate or savour the wine, little remarks pass from one to the other. "Don't you think they've been too sparing of lemon? Is it *fennel* they've been using? This butter must have been very cheap! Quenelles of pike should be served with a cheese soufflé browned, not *au gratin* like this!" That will be a couple carefully and with science testing a new restaurant to see if they will eat there habitually. And with an almost equal science they will consider the question of what is called "costings." What did the restaurateur spend on the pike at the Halles this morning? how much to allow for cheese; flour; butter; fines-herbes; service; fuel? In short, could we produce such *quenelles de brochet* as cheaply at home? If so, we will prepare them at home.

For though the middleman may be everywhere unpopular, in no country that I know of is he so continuously abused or so vigilantly combated as he is in France. A large proportion of the waste particularly of meat that takes place in Anglo-Saxondom is due to the fact that the retail butcher has the consumer under his thumb and will only sell such cuts of meat as suit himself, but in France, though the butcher is fairly

arbitrary as to prices and as to the giving of a piece of bone as make-weight, the customer is adamant as to getting just what she wants, cut in the manner that suits her. I have been present at the purchase of four sous' worth of rump-steak for a meal for a very small child. The butcher cut enough to make five sous but, at the angry protests of his customer, rather abashedly shaved off the unwanted portion. And this was in a rather dear neighbourhood.

This attrition of the retailer, the product of centuries of warfare, makes exact housekeeping much easier in France than elsewhere. You purchase daily the minutest portions sufficient to sustain through the day each member of your family and every grain of cooked rice that is left over after dinner brings a blush of shame to your cheek. But whereas in Anglo-Saxondom if a poor person wishes to purchase twopenny-worth of tea she will get only a halfpenny-worth, the French housewife who wants to make a tisane of tea purchases four sous' worth and gets the full value of her money. (Tea in France is normally used only as a medicine.)

But though " ordering " for a family is easier in France it has to be remembered that that condition of things has been brought about by the solidarity and determination of the French housewife and is no fortuitous set of circumstances. The butcher in Anglo-Saxondom, playing on the weakness and shame of the

customer, refuses to pare the fat off enormous, nearly meatless mutton chops; he will not sell less than half a leg of mutton; he meets remonstrances with a bullying assurance that less than a half leg isn't done! He has never been asked by the best families to be cheese-paring in his cuts. And the Anglo-Saxon buyer blushingly concedes that what the best families do not exact he cannot either. So you have the four mutton chops, with only the little noisettes of meat nibbled out, thrown into the pig-bucket.

I once, before the war, went home after the theatre with a distant connection whom I had known as a scatter-brained, spoilt member of the Anglo-Saxon-Parisian set. She had married a Frenchman and had a very sumptuous establishment indeed. So, being for some reason or other, and suddenly, extremely hungry I asked her if I could not have a sandwich or something. She said: "My dear F. . . . there is nothing of the sort in the house. There is *nothing*!" And when I looked—though I ought not to have looked—incredulous, she exclaimed: "Very well, we will go to the kitchen, and if I find enough meat or bread there to feed a mouse I will give the cook the sack on the spot!" And accompanied by the complacent husband who was sure of his wife's victory, we set out for the lower regions. She triumphed: there was nothing.

Now this cook had to estimate for quite a

number of domestics, retainers and heads of the family—I think about sixteen in all—and, although I do not mean that my connection did her own buying, she did check that man's books with such a vindictive pencil that I do not believe he got much more than his own sou on the franc on his purchases. Indeed the vastly satisfied husband assured me that his grandmother was certain that that cook made no illegal perquisites at all. The young wife had been taken in hand by the rather portentous grandmother and that had been the result. She was as disciplined and efficient a housewife as any to be found in France. And she had not in any way lost her high spirits, her social gifts or her pleasure in life. On the contrary, another sport had added itself to her occupations.

I have always regarded that circumstance as consoling, since what one Anglo-Saxon young woman can accomplish others well may; but of course that particular young woman had considerable assistance; the grandmother certainly supervised her activities, the chef no doubt lent his aid in a sporting manner. And it is to be remembered that the science of providing mere food for a family has ramifications that seem never to end. Whilst being addressed by someone else in a drawing-room the other day I was listening to a Frenchwoman talking also to someone else. She had just come back from somewhere—the Pyrenees I think—and was descanting on the dearness of food in whatever region it was.

The country, in fact, is apt to be much dearer to the visitor—and to the resident, for the matter of that, than is Paris herself. But the lady went on to say that what made housekeeping so difficult was the absence of certain ingredients, this making you have absolutely to reorganise your whole mental scheme of menus. . . . What the particular ingredient was that she had missed I did not catch, because my immediate interlocutor was also talking to me about the rise in prices of food. Let us say it was fennel, because I am particularly fond of fennel.

Well, without fennel you cannot have fish—not fresh-water fish. But without fish what will your menu look like? You are accustomed to have, four times a week, soup, fish, entrée, vegetable, cheese, dessert, the place of fish on other days being taken by *hors-d'œuvre*, omelettes and other egg dishes. But if you leave out fish . . . what then? The lady was accustomed to think out her menus for months ahead, rhythmically balancing day against day; now her whole rhythm, thought out during years, would have to be re-imagined. She had been distracted.

Let us divert our attention for a moment to the subject of eating—to *les bonnes choses de la France*—for a page or two, since I have no intention of writing a manual or even a whole chapter on eating or drinking in this country. I should like to, but the feeling possesses me that this is not the place. In a book that is less of propaganda for Latin culture one day I may revel for long in

that tranquil backwater and try to write of wonderful secrets. For now . . . only a page or two.

It is customary then to say that you cannot eat well anywhere north of an imaginary line that changes according to the imaginations of the speakers—some say Dijon; some put it as southerly as Lyons. That is not true. It is true that in Bordeaux, in Toulouse, in Périgord, possibly in Lyons, in the country round Albi, and as I think, round Dijon, you can go into any restaurant, hotel, roadside inn or other place where they offer food for sale with the sure hope that whatever is provided will be good—will be as much above mere "cooking" as music is above noise. You can cast yourself on the menu as into a sun-warmed stream and swim where you like.

That you cannot any longer do in Paris in *any* restaurant: in no single restaurant from the most famous downwards can you trust the card offered you by the major-domo. The same is true of the whole of the Ile de France and of the whole Nord. In true Provence you cannot eat at all: you will find nothing but haricot-beans, egg-plants, meat that *must* be goat and then haricot-beans; and of course garlic. But garlic alone is not enough to make a cordon bleu's reputation. So, if I am an old man mad about Provence, the Anglo-Saxon, reassured, may gather that, write how I may about *cuisines*, I do not live by meat alone.

Well, put it then that north of any line you like to draw—whether through Lyons or Dijon, or Tours or Blois, you cannot be certain of the menu. Nevertheless in Paris herself with the aid of a taxi-cab, in the Île de France and in the Brie with the aid of such means of locomotion as you affect from the foot or the bicycle to the aeroplane, you *can* find cooking so admirable that if, when for me the town of St Remy de Provence at last becomes the capital city of heaven, I eat half so well, I shall esteem myself blessed indeed. But to eat like that in Paris or its larger environs, in French Flanders, Alsace and, I dare say even in the Pas-de-Calais, you must do two things: you must make to yourself friends similarly purposed, and, whenever you enter a restaurant on chance or through rumour, you must ask the *patron* what dish and what wine he recommends for that day. If you will do that you will from time to time, and indeed fairly often, be astounded at what will be set before you. You have to remember that almost every corner of France has its *plats régionaux* and almost every restaurateur in Paris comes from one "region" or another—and means to return there as soon as possible. So he keeps his hand in at his regional cookery.

That you must remember. To ask then at one or other of the Norman brasseries round the Halles for *Cassoulet de Toulouse* or Rhône wines is to court disappointment though you may find them on the menu. (It does not mean that you will necessarily be disappointed, for many chefs

can cook in several languages or dialects—but the proceeding would not be very sensible—as if you should desire to procure olives or oranges from Brittany.) But if you are recommended to take Norman sole, sheep's trotters and pancakes heated in cognac and served with cream; to be washed down in cider, followed by coffee and calvados—which is old apple brandy— . . . well, after such a meal, you will at least admit that you have had a new experience in food for the hungry who live out of doors.

And do not believe that, supposing you to present any appearance of gustatory intelligence whatever, the host will recommend by any means the most expensive meats or wines of his programme. He will not. I was eating the other day at a restaurant in Paris that looked rather uninviting, but that had been recommended to me and that, judging from the general run of its prices, was sufficiently well frequented. The patron recommended his *civet de lièvre*, which I accepted. When it came to wine I wanted naturally something sweetish and red. My eye wandered over the names of sweetish red wines in the menu, all these from *Château Neuf du Pape* to the rest being priced at from thirty to fifty francs . . . which is a great deal! So I said to the patron:

"What shall it be?" He recommended me to try his vin d'Arbois—a wine of which I had never heard. I hesitated a little, looked for the name through the wine list in order to ascertain

the price and then succumbed. The wine was sweet, admirably suited to be drunk with jugged hare though more *rosé* than *rouge*. But it came in a *carafe*, which means that it was a draft wine. And it cost five francs. This is quite a common occurrence. There is no reason in the world why you should pay more than seven francs a bottle for ordinary drinking wine if you will seek out non-Anglicised places of refection and consult the host with deference and knowledge of what you want.

And what is true of Paris is true of the surrounding country; you can get very good cooking and a most admirable *Pouilly* at la Ferté-sous-Jouarre; you can get amazing cooking and perhaps the best cellar in France at Châlons-sur-Marne; you can do yourself *quite* well at Meaux; a pastry-cook in Crécy will supply you with admirable food; one of the best lunches I have ever eaten: clear soup, sole meunière, truffled chicken, roquefort, ices and desert, cost me twelve francs the other day in the most dismal little chemical-manufacturing town to be found on the map of France, just the other side of Fontainebleau.

This last was sheer accident—and such agreeable accidents are not of *very* frequent occurrence; still, they happen just often enough to make it worth while to take a chance now and then. There are two things to be observed: *never* go to a place recommended by any guide in the English language and never go to one of the famous Paris restaurants—unless you just want to be able

to say that you have been there! I lunched with a rich Anglo-Saxon the other day in the most famous restaurant in all Paris of the North Side—excluding the abominable eating-saloons attached to the more gorgeous international caravanserais. . . . Well, we ate perfectly tasteless, but quite well-grilled mutton chops; admirably tiny peas boiled in plain water; a much too immature Stilton and some very good grapes. The head-waiter neglected to see that we were supplied with table-napkins: the sommelier could not be got hold of to open the bottle of mineral water; the mutton chops were cold and the peas tepid before we could begin on them. And it is much the same with all eating-places patronised by Anglo-Saxon and other internationally floating populations. The proprietors no longer trouble to secure the suffrages of regular patrons; the waiters can afford to be perfectly negligent, Anglo-Saxons being too shy to diminish their tips in "swell" places merely because the service is bad. Your face has never been seen there before; it will never be seen there again; your chair will be taken whilst it is yet warm by another ill-advised one; and it's good-bye, don't care if I never see you again.

And this is very comprehensible. In the old days, say at Voisin's, if you chanced to want to eat boiled leg of mutton with caper sauce, you talked it over for a long time with the head-waiter, discussing from which province you wished the sheep to come, the exact size of the leg, how long

the meat should hang, how many capers and what other herbs and what proportion of butter should go to the making of the sauce. The head-waiter then translated your wishes to the chef, and when you had eaten your meal you sent the chef your congratulations or your criticisms. If there were criticisms be sure the chef would come up and argue with you. But nowadays . . .

I gave some years ago a lunch in New York at what was then reputed to be one of the two smartest eating-places in that agreeable city. It boasted of a world-famous French chef whose services were paid for at a fabulous publicity rate. Well, that lunch was the worst I have ever given: there were even worms in the branches of salad that accompanied the gigantic limbs of india-rubber chicken! The agony over I sent for the chef and asked him how he could . . . how he *could* have perpetrated such a crime?

He answered dejectedly that: Yes, his cooking was disgraceful, but what would you have? When he had arrived in that city he had been full of enthusiasms; he had cooked in a divine fury that lasted nearly a year. But, during that whole year not one single message from customers, not one word of praise, nor one of criticism! Nothing. It was like being buried. During his second year he had cooked with dogged endurance —a sort of heavy *cuisine bourgeoise*. Still no message had come to him from the dining hall.

Now, in his third and last year, he was just demoralised, indifferent, like a man who should be passing through a long period of heavy drinking, though he touched little but ice-water. It was dreadful that worms should be found in his salads: but there it was; it was dreadful—and that finished it! He brightened up to say after a deep sigh that, at the end of his year, he was returning to France to buy a little roadside inn near Péronne where he would get back into touch with his art by cooking for chance passers-by: he said he would be Lucullus amongst the cabbages, but never Marius amongst the ruins of Carthage!

That last frame of mind accounts for the amazing meals that in France you may eat in the most unlikely places. Between Arras and St Jean de Luz I have been cooked for by an ex-chef of King Edward VII, by an ex-chef to the House of Lords, ex-chefs to Lord Rothschild, to the Emperor of Austria, to Marshal Joffre and to I do not know how many others of the great ones of the earth; and always in little roadside inns or the commercial hotels of provincial towns—most usually however in the country outside towns. For the chef seems to like to sit in rose-tunnels meditating ever new savours and consistencies. . . . Not infrequently these little places will be rather badly managed as hotels—but the daily table d'hôte will be delicious and admirably served, and if you can get the host to talk to you and find you intelligent you will get a meal that

will be a memory to you for ever. . . . I remember, years ago at Hendaye, down near Spain . . . a single trout! Ah, tempi passati! tempi passati!

Great, wise, kind, generous, august, these aristocrats are spread out all over France—for chefs retire early to their rose-bowers and these come from all the world over. So that I verily believe that you could walk from Calais to Marseilles by way of Tours, and find at every day's end a resting-place presided over by such a chef. But, as I have said, these hotels will not be the best managed: you *may* find brooms or pails on the staircases, a bathroom rather the worse for wear and none of the white tiles and gushing of streams that mark the oncoming of our civilisation. But in such things all great artists are negligent: I have heard say that Joseph Mallord William Turner seldom tied his shoe-strings!

So *les bonnes choses* are still spread all over France, and never believe those that deny it—even if they be Frenchmen sighing over these degenerate days. The difficulty is for the traveller to find the great, good places; or the small, exquisite ones. I have tried one expedient myself with some success. That is to say, usually if one wishes to try somewhere new one goes to a place suggested by a like-minded friend of whom you may find plenty in this country, so that one forms as it were a company of about

the same tastes and of about the same habits of expenditure. But to do one's duty to that coterie one must oneself explore in order to contribute newness of one's own. Well, I have frequently found that the thing to do was to select one of the famous restaurants in Paris, or one of the starred hotels in guide-books to the provinces—and then to go near it to the first restaurant or eating-place that seemed at all bearable in its appointments. There you will not at all unusually find an establishment patronised by the clientèle that used to frequent the adjacent place when it was good. They will have been driven away by the extortionate prices and the bad service and the cosmopolitan insolence, but, being used to eat in that quarter or that street, they will when they remove settle on some humbler establishment of the immediate neighbourhood and, by one incitement and another, force the proprietor to become emulous of his more distinguished neighbour. Thus in the vicinity of two restaurants famous for their *cannetons rouennais*, *à la presse* or *au sang*, where the prices are atrocious, the service bad beyond belief, the really good wines in the cellars dwindling, the overcrowding appalling, you will find another where you will have *canneton à la presse* served and prepared before you with all the ceremonies. Personally I find them disgusting, and the wallowing in gore of the subsequent dish beyond all reason even for "rich" cookery. But the patron who prepares the dish

is an artist ; his eyebrows rise Mephistopheleanly as he screws down the press and the liquid, mixed blood and calvados and the rest, gushes out of the container ; his mouth forms little kisses as he stirs the results over the gleaming spirit-flame ; he faints ecstatically into the arms of his awed supporters as he drops in the final spoonfuls of brandy and madeira. Everything is all there, and you eat next to a minister of the Republic with, in the next room, two Academicians—and the whole at a fourth—what do I say ?—at a tenth of the price that you would pay a few yards away.

The reader will observe that in writing thus of cookery I only advert to rather northerly, greasyish cookery, for which I do not personally much care. Firstly, I can do so with composure, whereas if I wrote about dishes or wines for which I really care—I had for instance the other day some 1893 Vouvray with Marc de Bourgogne of the same date to top off the meal with, and if I wrote about that . . . Ah ! . . . But, if I wrote like that what credit should I ever again find in an Anglo-Saxondom where food is no more talked of than love or Heaven ?

And then . . . It is very difficult to write about restaurants without giving at least a shade of a hint as to where they are situated. And I am neither guide nor philanthropist. You may guess, if you can, where they give you perfect *sole normande*, sheep's trotters, *crêpes*, cider, calvados—and *canneton à la presse*. But if I

give you a hint of where you may taste to perfection . . . But I will not even mention the dishes or wines. . . . If I give you a hint of where those things are to be found . . .

But the sentence cannot be finished: I can think of no penalty sufficient.

One is in fact between the devil and the deep sea! One is anxious, for the credit of France, to point out how admirable still and always are *les bonnes choses*, which are not even transcended by *les gloires, de la France*. On the other hand, if one gives hints too precise the places where one eats with bliss shall be invaded by crowds of compatriots and others, till they become stifling—and deteriorate, deteriorate, deteriorate. For that is the doom of us Anglo-Saxons when we travel. *Nihil quod* . . . We touch nothing that we do not . . . sully!

Nevertheless I will give the reader this hint—he having been nice enough to purchase this book and so belonging to a superior class. In the provinces, if you wish to find an hotel where the cooking is good, do not trust any guide-book, however otherwise reliable: get a commercial travellers' directory.

The gentlemen who compile guides, whether in English or French, are without doubt conscientious, but they suffer from two very serious disadvantages: the guides take a long time to compile, so that even if you get one hot from the press the conditions, as concerns hotels at least, may have changed altogether. For it is

to be remembered that the cook as artist is by no means anxious to cook continuously for large bodies of the public. Indeed that is true of almost every kind of French craftsman. *They want to get back to their pays*—to grow what they shall cook for themselves in the shadow of the church tower of the village in which they were born. Says the beautiful old song:

> Je donnerais Versailles, Paris et St. Denys,
> Les tours de Notre-Dame, les clochers de mon pays,

the belfries of the singer's own village coming last as being the most precious thing in life.

And if you live at all long in France—in any French town—you will be astonished at the rapidity with which the tenancies of little cafés, little brasseries and little chop-houses change hands. This does not mean successive bankruptcies: it means that the tenants having taken a place and built up a goodwill, sell it at once and go back to their country to live on the proceeds for as long as they will last. I was astonished the other day to find the valuers in in a little café where I not infrequently take my apéritif; as far as I could remember the tenants had not been there very long—about nine months. Rather nice people. So I expressed my commiseration to the patronne, for I imagined that they must have been losing money.

"But why commiserate with us?" she said indignantly. "Do you imagine that we wish to live in this hole all our lives? We have made . . ."

She named the sum, but I forget it: it was a little over a hundred pounds in English money, however. They had made it as sheer profit on the goodwill after keeping themselves. What did I think! They were going back to their *pays* to see if they could make what we call a small-holding pay: if they couldn't they would come back to Paris and build up the goodwill of another café until they could try again. Most tenancies last naturally longer than that, but the tendancy is universal, so that however much statistics may point to and pessimists bewail the rural depopulation of France, that is more apparent than real. There is at any rate a constant flux and reflux between town and country: sufficient to constitute a fairly satisfactory condition whether physically or intellectually, and to preserve the fiercely independent individualism of the nation.

But satisfactory as that may be it makes the task of the compiler of guides almost impossible when it comes to eating. And there are naturally the usual vicissitudes in addition. During the war a hospital train, on which I was, breaking down just in Tarascon, we went and had a meal in one of the hotels. It was almost the most admirable meal that I can remember—for Provence! Two years ago I stopped in the same hotel and everything in it was bad beyond description. . . . But then the proprietor was a mere skeleton, gassed and dying by inches, and the whole time of his wife was taken up in nursing him. The other

day I heard from an Englishman living in the Pyrenees a mile or so from the Spanish border that the hotel at Tarascon had been bought by the son of a Pyrenean inn-keeper, so what it will be like when this winter I visit it there is no knowing.

On the other hand if you get a commercial travellers' directory—the Bottin directory for the departments is pretty good—you will find even the advertisements fairly informative: *cuisine bourgeoise* will mean pretty fair cookery of a simple kind; *cuisine soignée*, something better; *confort moderne* will mean baths, possibly a room for writing, even a lift sometimes! The commercial traveller in fact is the good angel of the casual voyager in France: he knows what he wants; what he wants is pretty good, and he sees that he gets it. And he wants the advertisements that are addressed to him when he goes into a new territory to be informative rather than idyllic.

Another class of population that keeps alive the local hotel and eating-house is that of the functionary, the army officer, the lawyer, the small banker and even the clerks of these last. This class of daily worker marries late and prefers the sort of sociability to be found in hotels where there is a daily ordinary to the solitary meal prepared by a house- or lodginghouse-keeper. And this class is relatively very large in France—and very much interested in the quality of its meals. Thus all over France you can drop in,

at lunch-time, on cheerful, educated and agreeable groups of men, eating quite good food that they have hammered the patron into getting to their tastes. He must do that.

It is that indeed that most distinguishes France from other lands—the determination of the customer to get what he wants. We others take what we get through indolence, shyness, indifference as the case may be, and thus the large store flourishes supplying what we call the "good household article" at a good household price more or less regulated by competition. The French customer on the other hand nearly always insists on personal contact with the seller if only for the sake of getting in a few of those home truths between man and man, the uttering of which in relatively classical phraseology forms so large a proportion of the simple pleasures of this country. For I really believe that a French purchaser would rather pay a little—but of course only a *very* little—more in a small shop where he can get at the proprietor than less in one of the great and impersonal stores. Indeed I have a theory—it may be right or it may be wrong—that the great stores in Paris exist very largely by sufferance of the permanent and floating foreign populations.

It must be remembered that the proportion of foreigners in France is very great—the permanent population according to the latest statistics being 2,900,000 out of a total of, I believe, 36,000,000, say one-twelfth, or 8 per cent. Of these again a very large proportion are settled in

Paris, and of course the main body of visitors in the immense majority are to be found in this city, or at any rate do their shopping here. And they do their shopping quite exclusively at the two or three big stores that advertise very largely. And it is significant that such of these big houses as have branches in provincial cities have them only in places like Nice that are overcrowded or exist altogether by foreigners, mostly Anglo-Saxon.

So that, if you read in statistics of the growth of the big Paris department store, do not believe that it is as large a factor as it would appear to be in the life of this country; remember that the foreign population increases faster still. As far as I am concerned I do not know a single foreign family in France that does not shop at those establishments and I do not know one French family that does.

The point is really worth making, for of all the unchangingnesses of France this phenomenon is the most unchanging—the distrust of mass production in anything but machinery, and the distrust of co-operation in anything at all. Of this the great growth in the number of small restaurants in a population so domesticated as is the French is a very singular symptom—for of course the restaurant cuts both ways. It is co-operative in that it is a restaurant but it retains the individual touch because it remains small. There are, of course, a few large restaurants in Paris and a few rather dreadful firms have numbers

of dull branches, but these do not increase in number and are rather old establishments. But the upspringing of small places is ceaseless and hardly to be numbered.

And I think that they should rightly be regarded rather as the uniting of several houses to do together that branch of their housekeeping that concerns itself with supply than as any symptom of a falling off in domestic habits. Two things contribute to it—the difficulty of obtaining domestic help and the great rise in the prices of eatables. The margin in fact between the price at which food can be prepared at home and the price charged at the smaller eating-places is so small that, if you are a careful *ménagère* in a small family, you will do without a cook and so make a profit and save time over your shopping. But you only achieve that by means of a continuous watchfulness at once over the restaurateur and over the appetites of yourself and the partner of your home.

And naturally the ratio of prices varies very considerably according to the *arrondissements* of the larger towns and the districts in the departments. I know villages where the prices of coal and such local products as eggs, milk and most meats are so high that it is much cheaper to eat at the table of the village *marchand de vin* than at home—and I know of other villages where the prices of commodities are so astonishingly low that the cultivators can hardly ever have heard of the change in the value of the franc.

And you will find the same astonishing variations in prices in neighbouring *arrondissements* and neighbouring streets in Paris and in any of the large or small towns in France. In a small town in the Cevennes—a dairying neighbourhood—I have known butter cost ten francs a pound in one shop and seven in the shop next door—butter precisely the same in quality. In a market off the rue Monge, a poorish but not very poor quarter of Paris, you will see bundles of endive exposed for sale on the stalls at fifteen sous the bundle; in a shop not five yards away you will see endive of precisely the same quality, and precisely the same sized bundles, priced at frs. 1.50—thirty sous.

For all these inconsistencies there are reasons into which I do not propose to go very deeply, for the matter here is not very much to my purpose—or would take a book to itself. Suffice it to say that in one village there will be a farmeress of a master mind who having a monopoly of dairy products simply *will* not sell her produce in the locality at less than exorbitant prices since she has a cold storage plant; in another district, as I have known happen on the Riviera, producers will enter into mutual contracts not to sell, say, oranges at less than twenty-two sous apiece retail, be the wholesale price what it may. In the case of the Cevennes shops the one dairyman had an exporting trade and studied prices in the papers; the other sold only locally, did not take in a paper and was content with a profit sufficient

to let him live comfortably. To buy at the stall set over against the shop in the Paris market you had to be there before eight in the morning or everything would be gone; moreover you must pay cash. So if you yourself could not, or your maid would not, rise sufficiently betimes, or if you needed credit, you must buy at either that shop or another. Distance and time in fact play a large part in creating these seeming anomalies. In my own village it annoys me to have to pay fourteen sous for an egg when I know that in the shops of a town two and a half kilometres away they are to be had for ten or in the markets on Friday for eight sous. But the egg consumption of my family is not large; it would annoy me to have to walk several times a week to that town to buy eggs, and to pay anyone else to do it would bring the eggs up to about the village price. Moreover—and this is no doubt what weighs with the average French buyer—I can make more by working myself than by wasting time on going longish, or even shortish, distances to cheaper markets. And France, as far as I know it, is singularly lacking in the means of minor transport. Every English village has its carrier or at least a man with a donkey cart who for next to no pence will do your marketing for you in a country town; in France nothing of the sort seems to exist—I suppose because the French housekeeper will let no one but herself do her buying for her. Similarly, in the towns the system of tradesmen delivering goods is hardly developed at all.

In making these constatations I am naturally talking in terms of smallish families and as a rule of families that are just on the border-line of keeping or not keeping one or two maids. Naturally if you are six or eight in family, the costs of firing and service being distributed over so many, you may produce a dish for less than you can get it in a restaurant—if, that is to say, you will exercise, or have exercised for you, as much care in buying as will be put into it by the restaurateur. For the restaurateur, rising at four every morning or earlier, is down at the Halles—the great central markets—before it is light, and there, buying with great skill such joints or consignments as exactly suit him and as happen to be specially cheap on the given day, he manages to obtain his day's provender at a rate that will let him come near satisfying his most watchful customers. For you must remember that he has to deal with a clientèle who every morning read in the papers the prices at the Halles; so that if there is a glut, say, of turbot they will ask for turbot at lunch and woe to the restaurateur who has not put down the price of his *turbot au gratin* by several sous.

And again it is to be remembered that the restaurateur is no Anglo-Saxon; the idea of making a vast fortune that he will continue to make vaster by opening more and always more "branches" supplying ad nauseam dull food that shall be a good household article practically never occurs to him. He is still something of an

artist and still something of Mine Host. He likes to talk to his customers and to walk in popularity between his tables, so that although he might conceivably overcharge one particular customer — probably Anglo-Saxon — over one particular bill he will not risk his popularity or his custom by making too great a dissimilarity between the prices on his menu and the price for which the same food can be produced on the domestic hearth.

All this is only by way of pointing out what an easy and what a pleasant thing the French have made of life by means of continually pegging away at details. The French housewife is keener, and that is why she is less harassed than her Anglo-Saxon counterpart; and being less harassed she is infinitely more cultured, and being infinitely more cultured she is infinitely worshipped in her household. Behind a place called Steenwerck in the year 1917 I was riding about looking for ferrets to buy. I went to get a drink into a hedge public house and it was filled with Tommies of one of the battalions of the Worcesters—a quiet, rural idyll, the Tommies being much like farm labourers at home. A blue fellow in a blue tin hat—a French artilleryman I think—came in and spoke to the man behind the bar. The man gave him a letter; the artilleryman sat down and with awkward fingers opened the envelope. As he read he began to cry; his crying became terrible. The blond Worcesters looked at him with immense uneasy blue eyes; they hitched and fitched like oxen confronted with mystery. At

last, having informed myself—though I need not have—I said :

" Men, that man's mother is dead. Don't go on staring at him."

In simple wonderment they shuffled with their heads in another direction, explaining one to another :

" 'Is muvver's dead ; you 'ear the 'orfcer." . . . " Oo—er ! 'Is muvver ! " . . . " Cor ! 'Is *muvver* ! " . . . " 'Is muvver's dead ! Oo—er ! "

We *do* furnish strong, silent heroes to the world!

CHAPTER VIII

BEING OUT OF HEART WITH GOVERNMENT

Few people can have avoided wondering at one time or the other at the singular phenomenon that whereas the great bulk of a nation are on the whole simple, good-natured, easy folk like oneself, a little stupid certainly, and certainly a little provincial, the external aspect of that nation as nation will be to say the least something widely different. The average Englishman is not cruel, not very dishonest, not vastly inspired with land hunger; certainly by no manner of means could he be called Macchiavellian or in the least interested in his Empire. He seldom reaches an intellectual development equal to that of a boy of fourteen in any other country—but that that is the greatest of his crimes is seldom alleged against him. The average citizen of the United States is much like the average inhabitant of Great Britain; he is perhaps a little more tiresomely "bright," and a little more conscious of the imperial destinies of his Nation. He takes off his hat every time he sees Old Glory. But if you threw three stones, one into Birmingham, one into Lyons and one into, say, Philadelphia, the chances are that the three citizens you hit

would—except in matters of culture and intellect—be as like as three apples from not very dissimilar trees. . . . And no doubt you could add Dresden, Barcelona and Milan to your experiment without getting very dissimilar results.

Yet our national aspects, the one set against the other, are formidable, and formidably different, and those aspects again react formidably between us when we meet. I swear that I have no design to starve the unfortunate citizen of the United States by cornering rubber or to bankrupt inscrutably all American financiers by paying war debts to North America. I never held a rubber share in my life, and such is my income that, though two shillings in the pound of it goes towards paying the American tribute, the amount could hardly hurt any financier in Wall Street. Yet the other day a United States Secretary of State was threatening to declare financial war on me because of rubber, and last year on the *Paris* a quiet, retired Philadelphia lawyer suddenly all but blacked my eye because for some reason that I could not understand, but Macchiavellishly, British payments to the United States were ruining his country. And I have no doubt that if I in turn tell the next American poet that I shall meet on the Boulevard Montparnasse that the great danger to the future world is that the United States is assuming more and more the aspect that Prussia had before the war, he will be bewildered if not indignant; so should I be if a French boulevardier told me the

same thing as to Great Britain. And the poor normal French citizen, the last thing that he wants being colonial military adventures, is bewildered and pained when told that in his heart he is a cross between Napoleon, Attila and the late Cecil Rhodes.

Heaven forbid that I should be taken as uttering any comments on these international topics; the one thing that I am anxious to point out is that you and I, decent, quiet, friendly people, have absolutely no voice in these matters. One used to point out that a nation has the rulers that it deserves: that was perhaps true in feudal days when if a sufficiency of people did not like a ruler they cut his throat. But to-day it is absolutely untrue, since in a world of normally friendly people we have no nations that are cordial the one to the other. . . . A pleasant gentleman with noticeably shiny teeth comes to solicit our vote. He stands for peace, retrenchment and reform, and assures us that if he is selected to this or that national assembly he will see that our local main roads are well kept up or that war widows are paid proper pensions. We vote for him and, hey presto! he has not been in office a day before there he is twisting the lion's tail; crowing derisively at Chanticleer—or, as they say, doing desperate things with rubber that shall set three continents in a blaze! Then in come the journalists of the Boulevards and elsewhere, and getting their livings by writing incisive, ill-humoured,

malicious, smart or galling paragraphs—they get their livings, though half the things they say they do not believe. I met not long ago a journalist employed on a paper of the Extreme Left a month or so after he had written a most spirited article calling on the populations reading his sheet to organise pogroms against all foreigners living in their midst. The article was written with real passion! When I asked him why he wanted me and mine assassinated, he appeared just simply bewildered, having forgotten all about his article. I produced it and read some of his own phrases to him. "Oh *that*!" he said. "That is not *me*. The Paper ordered me to write that."

That then is how International aspects build themselves up, and how Nations assume the appearance of malignant and long-toothed ogres.

It would be a good thing if something could be done to alter that: we none of us want to be assassinated; we probably most of us shall be if we live long enough.

The only way to avoid it is for quiet, decent people to organise—not into regimental units wearing black, blue or scarlet shirts, though these too are manifestations of peoples all out of heart with Governments—but into something like Book Clubs! I do not of course mean book clubs—but I am not an organiser. It must, however, be clear that the first necessity of the day in European and semi-European civilisation is that quiet, decent people should get together

and, at any rate in matters international, make their voices heard. Clubs are obviously not necessary for this: national opinions can be changed except during periods of actual hostilities by quite a few educated people, in cafés and drawing-rooms and casually public places, more or less weightily correcting loquacious fools. In that way—one is speaking only sketchily—public opinions are really formed when those public opinions are destined to be lasting and so not clamorous.

There does exist to-day—fourth-dimensionally looming amidst the welter of mad Governments with clamouring boundaries—another Commonwealth whose boundaries are coterminous only with those of the habitable globe. This is the Republic of the Arts and of Pure Thought. (The Anglo-Saxon reader must forgive if for ten minutes this, my King Charles's head, intrudes itself; I know it ought not to!)

The Republic of the Arts and of Pure Thought is then the only entity that embraces all nations and all creeds, and whose intimate language is universal. It is not true to say that Charles Dickens wrote English or Mark Twain American: they wrote the language of Turgenev, Heine and Ronsard. It is not true to say that Holbein, Hogarth, Whistler, Manet or Velasquez painted in German, English, American, French or Spanish. They were painters. The music of Bach is not Suabian; that of Purcell not Warwickshire music; Palestrina is not Roman; Debussy

did not write in the argot of la Villette: what they produced is Music.

This also is true: when two artists meet, working in whatever medium, they recognise themselves at once as being of the same nation though one come from New York or the other from Tokio; but an artist from New York does not necessarily recognise a New York stock-jobber or politician or dry goods store proprietor or soap manufacturer or lawyer as a compatriot —or even as a fellow human being; and it will be so with the French, the English or any other artist. They will recognise their legal compatriots as fellows only if they have certain qualities whether of culture, of sincerity or of good will.

There then you have the basis—the very makings!—of an international comity whose only jealousies shall be those between individuals or schools; whose only "interests" shall be in the prevalence of the non-representational or the rendered-material; whose only Triumphs shall be those of the Impression over the Statistic. . . . That, however, will not interest the reader.

But the point about France is that, if it seems desirable that that Republic aforesaid should influence the counsels of the world, France is the only nation at all recognisable as being fit to be the nucleus round which such a comity could build itself up—and indeed, much as I dislike Paris of the North Side, I cannot see where else in the world save in Paris of the Left Bank such

a comity could find a representative home. If you suggested that London, Glasgow, New York, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco or Seattle should become neutral ground in which though all the world were at war sanity should quietly pursue its way, they might see that there was something in the idea—but if you suggested that they should show some honour to Pure Thought as a preliminary process their inhabitants would set up a universal, vast guffaw. The French would see nothing funny about it.

The French Government did indeed lately inaugurate a scheme for establishing an institute of International Applied Thought in the face of the fierce opposition of, naturally, the British Government; and although this organisation occupies itself mainly with such things as Law, various forms of Vaccination, Biology, Wireless Telegraphy, and the more material forms of human, mental and physical activities, the willingness of a nation to plank down a considerable sum of money in furtherance of any international union of *any* sort of thought is—Governments being that they are!—striking enough. The first feat of British Governmental economy after the war was to abolish the Historical Branch of the Foreign Office, saving twelve hundred a year. You would think we must be mad!

But the point about France, again, is that *all* French activities lead up to and culminate in the promotion of some sort of thought or of Humanities with, probably, a preference for the humanities,

and that for a peasant or small bourgeois family to have one of its members at least adorning one of the learned or generous professions is almost as much a necessary aspiration as of old was the desire of such families to number a priest amongst their children. It is because of this that French education and French instruction alike have reached their present amazing—their present almost excruciating—stages. For both branches of human activities are here pursued with a fervour such as other nations only apply to sports or cruelties. It is something almost formidable since it is not only the parents of the little children that egg the little children on to study—it is that the little children themselves join in the pursuit with an almost infinite gravity, and even with an extraordinary zest.

To see a French child in process of preparing for an examination is to see a sparkling-eyed little animal of the chase studying every avenue of a dense forest with an avid attention. You will see groups of children, at certain given dates, in every village playground throughout France ; the little boys still in short socks, bare cropped heads and black overalls, the little girls still in pinafores and long hair. Their heads will be close together and they will be discussing or listening with frantic earnestness. And what they will be discussing will be the nature of the examiners before whom at the sub-county town they will come in order to pass out of the primary school. They will canvass the individuality and the

foibles of the individual examiners, each child giving any hint that he or she may have heard from parents or from other children who have formerly gone through the ordeal. For all the world they will resemble little Anglo-Saxons discussing in *their* playgrounds—but the Anglo-Saxons will be discussing the nature of the bowlers they will have to face in their next cricket match or memorising the secret clue-words that will be used in their next football game. And do not believe that the little French children are wanting in team spirit: it would be better for an Anglo-Saxon boy or youth—or grown man!—to miss six catches in an international match than for a miserable, nervous French child of thirteen to be bowled out by a sarcastic, sniffing, myopic examiner with a question as to the secret reason for the policy pursued by the Government of Louis XVIII towards Belgium; as to the price received by Napoleon for Louisiana; or as to the nature of synthetic materials produced from the coal-tar ring. That child will have brought down the average of passes for their school.

And for months after the French child with face all alive with emotions will discuss the varying phases of its delight in foiling an examiner and will allude with contempt to the shivering Jacques, the snivelling Louise or the lumpish Charlotte who could not upon the spur of the moment answer the questions as to the Government of Louis XVIII or Napoleon or as to the differences between aspirin and synthetic mauve dyes.

But there is no end to the serious attention that French children will give to educational matters: I once passed a group of four primary school children three of whom were engrossedly listening to what a fourth read from a newspaper. What he was reading was a serious appeal to school-children written by one of the most serious and prominent of French publicists. It was the day before the re-opening of the school year and the publicist was reminding school-children of the cost of school buildings, desks, paper, school-books and of all the rest of educational paraphernalia. He was pointing out that waste and rough handling of school materials cost money and exhausted the goods of France, so that the boy who defaced his Latin primer beyond using by his successor in the school or the girl who wasted chalk on the blackboard were, however minutely, contributing towards the financial disasters of the Republic. The children listened, exclaiming from time to time:

"Tiens! C'est vrai! C'est vrai ce qu'i'dit! Faut s'en souvenir!"

The cost of education in France is just over one quarter of that of public instruction in Great Britain, the population being but very little smaller. It produces however a nation entirely compounded of at least instructed and articulate human beings—and a very large proportion of the French to-day are even educated!

It is perhaps true that the French child is overworked at school; it perhaps isn't. But if

he is he gets it back in the seriousness with which he is accepted by his elders as being a factor in the life of the Republic. I think the thing that has most struck me in France is the seriousness with which the views of quite young children are listened to by quite old men. You will be in company of half a dozen grandfathers of different eminences and weights in the world and of one hobbledehoy in his first billycock hat and his first stand-up collar. The youth will join in every discussion of the usual sort of thing that is discussed in French gatherings: on the fiscal system; on difficult points in the grammar of Montesquiou; on points of international marine law; on the style of the late M. Proust; on rural depopulation and the birth-rate. . . . The youth will take his share, talking precociously, with volubility and with great correctness of epithet. Sometimes he will take more than his share.

Now when, for the first time, I used to hear such a young animal talking I used to feel the itch to say:

"Kick the little beast out of the room!" One is Anglo-Saxon and used to keeping people in their places.

But, the greybeards and the grandfathers listening to the young man with serious attention, all their faces turned towards him, I always held my tongue. They would answer him; combat some of his opinions; agree with others, and, as to yet others, would ask if that were the latest teachings of the Schools.

I do not say that *all* precocious boys get on all occasions serious attention from septuagenarians —or from men of forty, but what is striking is that so many do. And, when I remember my own boyhood and those of many others of my former companions, I am sure that we would rather have worked twice as hard as we did at school or later if we could by so doing have escaped the atrocious sneers and the cruel snubbings of our elders whenever we opened our mouths in their presences. . . .

It is all so different. The French—so I have been told by several of them, and I believe it—are apt to regard themselves and their own careers as only stepping stones to the future, the young being the real treasure of France, and this works in two ways towards making of the French the cultured people that they are. In the first place the parents—and particularly the mothers—go practically to school again when their children arrive at school age ; in the second, the children finding that their studies occupy the serious attention of the adults around them, are heartened to undertake the very serious labour that French education exacts.

And it is to be remembered that French differs from all other educations in the fact that it aims first at fostering the faculty of expression—even of self-expression—in the pupil. There comes back to me as an extreme instance the case of a young man whom I knew well. As a student he was not singularly industrious, and having to go up for

oral examination before a very distinguished professor of history of strong political leanings he was asked a question on a subject of which he knew practically nothing: I think it was, precisely, about the relations of the Court of Louis XVIII to intrigues in the Low Countries. When I say that he knew nothing I mean that he knew about as much as any educated person—you or I—might know but had not the specialists' knowledge that he ought to have had. Being quick of wit and an admirable speaker he saw at once his way to bluff the matter out. He invented on the spur of the moment an intrigue in which, as far as I can remember, Talleyrand took an important part of a discreditable kind, Talleyrand being one of the examiner's heroes. The examiner interrupted him, becoming angrier and angrier, more and more frequently, with questions such as "What about so and so? What do you imagine, then, happened on such and such a date?"—this giving the young man precisely the dates and data that he needed to fill out his fanciful design.

The examiner grew more and more furious, until at last he was as near pouring objurgations on the young man's head as a distinguished historian could permit himself to come and the examination ended in outcry. But subsequently the great man remarked in his report that the candidate's views of history were atrocious and his statement of facts so warped by political opinions as to be practically inaccurate. Nevertheless a candidate had a right to his own political opinions, and in the

case of a young man with so brilliant a gift of expression an examiner could do nothing but pass him as high as possible in the hope that a deeper subsequent study of history would lead him to arrive at sounder views. From the French point of view not only was the examiner right but the examination was justified of itself.

And for myself I cannot but think that the French point of view is right, humanly considered. Instruction and even the factual side of education itself add so very little either to your internal pleasure or to the control of character during later life ; the power of expressing oneself to oneself is invaluable if merely because it will let a man recognise his own limitations. It is because the power of expression is so widespread, so nearly universal in this country, that the Anglo-Saxon is apt to find the French cold. Where we, remaining a race of amateurs, are ready to blunder into innumerable mental adventures and sentimental blind alleys, coming off clumsily, wounded, with singed wings or merely ridiculous, the Frenchman, though by nature he may well be the more impulsive of the two, will recognise that such and such an affair is not for him and so will go unscathed until, should he find the need to embark on such affairs, he shall have mastered their technique. Then as like as not he will excel.

That that is so is most easily appreciable by Anglo-Saxons if for a moment we consider the domain of sports. When I was a boy the idea that any Frenchman could excel at Wimbledon, as

a jockey at a first-class meeting, as a breeder or owner of racehorses, at football or at golf would have appeared merely ludicrous; to-day we English have surrendered I don't know how many championships to the French and to other, Dago or non-European nations. On the other hand I imagine that for all-round amateur sporting ability the English lead the world rather easily still. If I hadn't, until a very few years ago, been moderately efficient in four or five games I should have thought myself rather less than a man and so would most of the generation with whom I was brought up. At the same time it never occurred to me to study with any attention the technique of the games I played, nor did it to any of my fellows: after a little preliminary practice we would embark on a game of cricket, soccer, rugby, golf, fives, lawn tennis or real tennis with some confidence that we would give the other fellow or the other side—a game; and that spirit remains pretty well the same in England. But the spirit of the world in these things has changed with the growth of specialisation.

The team spirit of a French—and I believe an American—school that interests itself in football is devoted far less to the turning out of an eleven that shall beat an eleven from another school than to training one or two nearly professional footballers who shall become if possible international players or, failing that, great interclub ones. And those players will play no other games; indeed they will regard all other games with

gloomy indifference. It is the same with sprinting, rowing, swimming, long-distance cycling—even with bull-fighting! And naturally with boxing. The chief English opponent and victim of the late chief French heavyweight was pretty well first-class in four games outside his professional occupation; the Frenchman when not boxing or training for a match loved . . . to play with his chickens. He said it rested his mind. I never heard the Briton talk of having a mind though I had him under my command as sergeant-instructor for quite a time. And if you saw the two fighting, not boxing, for, as a once qualified referee, I am ready to certify that the Englishman was the better boxer—but when you saw them punching hard and angry you saw how prudent the Frenchman was to rest his mind instead of playing cricket. The Englishman was a great, normally good-natured ploughman whose thoughts moved as slowly as the legs of a shire horse; the Frenchman thought seven punches ahead with the speed of hatred. Well, he was a Frenchman. The Englishman thought him cold, but when it was a matter of fighting he got the goods.

And that is what the Frenchman—any Frenchman!—is out for: to get the goods out of life, love, horse-breeding, racing, fighting, house-keeping, novel-writing, biologising, eating economically in restaurants or, on occasion, eating very sumptuously in the same restaurants . . . and out of his ideals. For, though, if you engage

in any pursuit, sport or trade with a Frenchman you are apt to find him so coldly set on that occupation that you will feel as if your fingers freeze, yet, along lines allotted to himself for letting himself go, you will find him capable of an idealism and a lack of self-consciousness and even of self-restraint that will astonish you. It may be letters, it may be love, it may be patriotism ; it may be just almsgiving or the Creed . . . along the lines of one or other of the greater human motives the French man or woman will have his or her point of sensibility, or if you prefer it, his weak spot. He will not make a sentimental beast of himself, but he will go to the extreme limits of generosity.

But in his normal life he aims simply and solely at efficiency—not at our efficiency, but at that personal self-respect that enables him to be in harmony with his own soul as he expresses his soul to himself. Our "efficiency" consists firstly in keeping fit, then in surrounding ourselves with objects that function smoothly—postal services, train services, taps, cogwheels, news services, departmental stores competitively providing, as has been said, that dullest of all things, the good household article, at a reasonable price. But, though the French—and particularly the young French—pay a sort of lip-service to that sort of material smoothness of functioning, a Frenchman's heart is so little in the matter that, let him get ever so little older and you will find him, oh, quite shockingly indifferent to the want

of modernity in the sanitary arrangements of his country cottage! I used to be amazed—and indeed distressed—just after the war in Paris to find what a large number of young Frenchmen had ventured as far as—and had even written books about—Oxford or, even amazingly, Columbia University, which is in New York. They acquired a singular, and indeed accurate, knowledge of English or American university or drawing-room slang and quite an insight into the values that Anglo-Saxondom attaches to life. Well, it is not so very long since the war, but already those individuals have very completely forgotten what they then learned.

The fact is that the pull of French life on the imagination and on the habit of mind is so immensely strong because it is founded on the secret places of the intellect. The intellectual or reflective life is not necessarily a dull thing; to a bold thinker the problems of human life can be as thrilling as any physical pursuit. But the Anglo-Saxon male never gets beyond intellectual adolescence because whether at home or at school the whole pressure of the educational machinery from which he suffers is directed to eliminating intellectual adventure or to presenting it so dully that any healthy youth must needs resent the infliction. Religion, the incidence of destiny, the exigencies of sex, problems of poverty or of personal contacts—none of these things find anything but at best official and ponderous mention in a ponderously dull comment

in Anglo-Saxon curricula or periodicals, whilst in the home these subjects are rigorously and shame-facedly avoided. In France, on the other hand, it is precisely to these matters that the most cultivated educationalists and the most widely read periodicals of all but the most popular nature devote themselves, and these matters are the staple subjects of conversation round the dinner-table at which the children sit. Thus whereas the Englishman never grows beyond adolescence, the Frenchman of mature years has directed the whole of his desire for efficiency to a real knowledge of what the life of the adult is and what vicissitudes are likely to meet him during his passage through this world. So he has been a professional in all these matters since the age of sixteen, or of fourteen if he is at all precocious.

I once heard a very gifted French lady make a complaint of a singular and to me inscrutable nature. She had been on the platform—I think she had even been speaking—at some sort of social reform meetings in the poorer quarters of London, to audiences mostly of working men. And she had been impressed by the fact that when she or other speakers answered questions asked by members of the audience, the questioners would exclaim: "Ah, we had not thought of that point!" And she complained that had the audience consisted of French questioners they would have said, instead: "Ah, we knew all that at school!" . . . But they *would* have known

it all at school, so I do not see what there was to complain about.

The difference is singularly marked in the case of bilingual children, of whom there are now so many in France. You will find that such a child of from five to eight of either English or French parentage will, as far as speech, gesture and point of view go, be practically as old as you or I when speaking French, but will be practically a baby when speaking English. If you tell such a child stories in French you must tell it the stories of Perseus and Andromeda, of Philemon and Baucis, of the goat of M. Seguin, of the Pope's Mule—or you must read it the poems of Lamartine; but if you are trying to entertain it in English it will be still in the stage of appreciating Jack the Giant-killer and Dickory, Dickory Dock, and at the age when the child appreciates in English "Baby, Baby Bunting," in French it will be singing:

> Ainsi font, font, font
> Les petites marionnettes,
> Trois petits tours et puis s'en vont

—verses about which advanced English essayists have written pages and philosophic pages.

When it comes to gestures and manners the contrast is even more strongly marked. The same child that in English woodenly blurts out ungrammatical phrases half in slang, half in baby language, when translating the same remark to a French person will have beautiful gestures of the hands and wrists, a lit-up expression, and

will speak a beautifully correct language with all the subjunctives and difficult plural exceptions exactly right and in a clear fluting voice without the slurring of a syllable.

The genius of the languages is no doubt largely responsible for this: there is a really sensuous pleasure in uttering a correct French sentence, as there is in eating good French cookery, the pleasures being very nearly akin. They come, that is to say, from associations, a French word or phrase being always a conscious philological sensation in the mind, a French construction being always a matter of common-sense except when it is an exception. There is no discoverable reason why one should say *bonnes gens* whereas if the adjective follows the word *gens* it must be in the masculine; the use of the subjunctive is not reasonable, but it is very lovely; why should you say *les Johnson* when you mean "the Johnsons"? why should an author write "*mes lecteurs ont bon estomac*"? why do you write *quatre mille quatre cents* when you must write *quatre mille quatre cent quinze*? There are two directly opposed answers to these questions, both being true! The Frenchman likes to be pedantic in his language; the French also refuse to be pedantic in their language.

It is perhaps a matter of degree or perhaps a matter of two humours. On the one hand you may like to be precise in your phrases as they leave your mouth, because it makes you personally precise about what you are expressing; on the

other hand, if you are extraordinarily practical you arrive at a point where you say: "To be too logical about our beloved language is to make our beloved language appear absurd!"

The real point is that the French language is a beloved language, it is delighted in by all who use it; it is savoured, rolled over the tongue, played with, aided with gestures. Nothing is spared that can add to its bright vitality. My kitchenmaid, from Alsace though she be, cares more about the speech in which she explains why she has insufficiently drained her cauliflower, and will express herself far more justly and grammatically than the King of England making a speech from the Throne or a United States President issuing a message on Thanksgiving Day. Nay, in their private moments you will hear judges of the High Court and barristers of the most miraculously forensic, discussing minute points of grammar—the use of "de" before the infinitive, or in such phrases as "rien d'utile"—for hour after hour.

And the real reason why your bilingual child will, in French, be a graceful, gesturing and adult being, whilst being in English guttural, stuttering and infantile, is that no child in France will hear careless or gross French—or French undramatically delivered. I do not say that my Alsatian kitchenmaid, vastly superior though her grammar may be to that of the King of England, is invariably correct in all her periods: but, to the measure of the light vouchsafed her, she is absolutely scrupulous. It won't—the child—

ever come across carelessnesses of diction or of expression, so how should it, itself, be careless or expressionless ?

Youth in fact in France is honoured beyond youth in any other country that I know ; but it is taken in hand three or four years earlier than in other countries, babyhood ending with almost the first spoken word and baby language being here almost non-existent. There are of course one or two baby-words like *bo-bo*, *tou-tou* or *mitzi*, but the Anglo-Saxon habit of, for long years, treating the child as an infantile and bewildered village idiot, of repeating puzzled mislocutions for the benefit of guffawing friends, is in France unknown, and would be discouraged if it existed. Here, mentally, the parent exists for the child, not the child for the parent. A French child staggering over the gravel of park paths will have its lisping mispronunciations immediately and carefully corrected for the sake of its future ; we chortle and snicker for months and years over our children's blunders for our own delectation, never correcting them until it is practically too late. The Anglo-Saxon man of education returning from a journey will exclaim to his son in a tone of careful indifference : " Hello, Gruffles," or " Podge," thus perpetuating the remembrance of the child's earliest blundering over his own name. The least educated French labourer returning home from an absence will stretch out his arms from a great distance towards his child and exclaim : " Enfin je te revois, ma petite

princesse ! " and the child will answer gravely and comfortably : " It is long since thou didst call me ' little fruit of my love ' ! "—petit fruit de mes amours !

So, saving a year here, a year there, the French child, when it reaches maturity, has an adult composure in the face of the problems of life and morals such as can only come from the serious companionship of adults and such as the Anglo-Saxon rarely if ever attains to. For it is significant that even the fairy tales of Mme d'Aulnoy or Perrault are instinct with a cynicism and a clearness of point of view that would pain an English cabinet minister and grievously shock a stockbroker. In the English version of Red Riding Hood the young woman herself is unharmed and the woodcutters rushing in cut up the wolf, the grandmother jumping out safe and sound from among the remains—which would seem to be a messy affair. In the French version the wolf eats the two, whereupon the woodcutters remark that young women should not talk to strangers in woods. Or read the story of the Astute Princess. . . . But perhaps you had better not. Even the French version of Tom Thumb might keep you awake !

As a result France possesses an adult population capable of expressing itself on questions of interest to the grown-up, leading practical, practicable lives, its wealth very evenly distributed, with no poverty to speak of, with almost no public grossness or drunkenness, with an admirable

self-respect that makes class-feeling almost unknown. Obviously as the years go on the circumstances of the *haute bourgeoisie*, who are entirely admirable people and from whose level this book has naturally most usually written itself —those circumstances, as in every other country, grow less and less comfortable and their positions less and less defined. They melt downwards towards the *petit bourgeois* as the barriers between the peasant, the handicraftsman, even the industrial labourer and the *petite bourgeoisie* grow more and more fluid. But the *petite bourgeoisie* and all the others are all admirable and, as they go upwards in the scale of things, assimilate wonderfully the traditions of French civilisedness.

It is at these things that one should look when appraising a nation. In this country, go where you will—in the cheapest *bistrots* amongst carmen, in the public conveyances or amongst the crowds of public places—if you speak to the man next to you, you will find that he is an intelligent being with an awakened mind that can work upon given instances and with sufficient instances stored in his mind to make him good company. He will know what you mean and will have a point of view if you talk about public questions of the day, about the arts, philosophy, aviation, the elections to the Academy, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception or where you can get good wine. And he will not be of the wealthier classes: any provincial tram-car

conductor or commercial traveller will talk to you about those things. I was once in an hotel where day after day the most appalling rows used to go on between table and table of Marseilles tradesmen taking their summer holidays. It was deafening and continuous. Well, they were quarrelling and they went on quarrelling about the respective merits of the writings of Paul Bourget and Maurice Barrès—for the meal-times of certainly four whole days. The writers seemed oddly assorted for comparison, but there it was. The diners would take their seats in silence; then from one table someone would call out a phrase of one or the other writer and say: "What do you think of that?" And the whole room would break loose: adipose merchants, tired mothers, adolescents, little girls with pigtails, pairs of lovers—even the waitresses!

The effect was strikingly different from that to be observed in either English or American boarding houses.

I shall I know be taken as disliking those of my own race—even those of my own country. But that is not so. When, here or in Paris of a winter dusk, tea and lights on a social afternoon have been brought in and we look round the room and say, "We *are* all English, aren't we?" a certain satisfaction, truly, settles down on me. There it is: we are back at the school-room tea; we will have large, thick slices of bread-and-butter, jam, buttered toast: possibly even muffins! And I

assure you that black indignation will still fill my mind at the thought that because of the iniquitous way in which the County Tables are compiled Kent has nothing like the place she ought to have. . . . Yorkshire indeed! Playing ten professionals! Frost has also stopped the East Kent hounds, not to mention foot and mouth disease. Well, if you will admit live cattle into Great Britain you may as well shut up hunting—and farming as well. Yes, I assure you the old leaven works!

I will go even further in the way of confession. There are times when sitting in blue-grey surroundings round those tea-tables where the tea is supplemented with decanters of white port and plates and films of napkins accompany the *petits fours*; sitting very stiff and decorous in one of a semicircle of bergères of light oak upholstered in blue-grey tapestry, with the conversation going in decorous full swing about Teutonic influences on the style and cadences of Marcel Proust, then sometimes, at the thought that I might miss the conversational ball in its round, forgetting the formula in the panic thought that three sentences back I may have used a wrong tense . . . then suddenly, madly I shall wish myself back in . . . oh, say Hampstead or even Greenwich Village, where there is no formula and where I may sit silent for four minutes or even for five. It is the most dreadful feeling in the world, since the most dreadful thing of all the world would be to commit a *gaffe* in one of the

salons here—unless of course one should mean to, when it is pleasant.

You perhaps do not know the formula? It is like this. A French friend of mine of the high bourgeoisie told me that he had been at great pains to learn a little conversational English for the sake of being nice to Anglo-Saxon troops a little time back. So, one day in times more piping, going to a garden party at an Anglican bishop's in a sea-shore town in the south of France and being anxious, like a good guest, to keep the party bright, he approached a distinguished stranger in a monocle and spats and asked him: "You are going to Marseilles to-morrow?"

There was, you understand, no reason for the question. He did not know the gentleman and had no reason to think that he was going to Marseilles. But the rules of the game in France have it that that Anglo-Saxon should have replied: "No, but on Friday I propose to betake myself to Monte Carlo." My friend would then have said: "The terrace in front of the Casino there is magnificent, but I sometimes think that I prefer the sea-front of Brighton as being wilder, more near to Nature." The Briton would then have stated *his* preferences and so there would have been *entamé* 'd a conversation that might have ranged from Mentone to the Cameroons. To my friend's: "You are going to Marseilles to-morrow?" however, the Englishman replied simply and peremptorily: "No!" and continued to gaze at his spats through his monocle.

My poor, harmless friend was genuinely hurt. It is in that way that international relationships become strained.

How much better would it have been had my compatriot—how much better it might still be if we all—reflected that the conversations in Ollendorff's grammar which used to divert us were in reality first-class guides to intercourse, or even realistic renderings of what takes place at French garden parties. To answer the question: "Have you the spectacles of the gardener's aunt?" with the statement: "No, but I have the oil-painting of my wife's deceased sister," might lead almost anywhere conversationally—to the consideration of the latest art-movements; to speculations as to bereavements, or even, harking back to the original question, to a discussion as to whether blindness or total loss of hearing be the worse affliction.

And that is not really so unserious as it sounds. My own compatriots and other Anglo-Saxons for the matter of that are apt to appear awkward and even to cause pain on Continental social occasions. I was listening the other day—I could not help it!—to a conversation at a table next to mine in a restaurant on the North Side. A benevolent Anglo-Saxon, white-haired and with a white-haired wife, was explaining to a Frenchwoman, the widow of an officer killed during the war who had apparently applied for the situation of governess to the grandchild of the couple—was, with the aid of a dictionary and a *very* loud voice,

explaining that had the French troops been as heroic and the French officers as competent as the . . . well, as the troops of his own country! —their losses would have been much smaller and she herself would not have been widowed.

Well, we have our virtues and the consciousness of our achievements. We are . . . oh, that last anecdote shows that we are fully conscious of what we are and at school I was taught that one does not praise one's own side, so I leave that at that!

But I have long had the consciousness that the French and the Anglo-Saxon civilisations should be, if they aren't, one civilisation with interchangeable languages, with interchangeable educations, with interchangeable rules of life. Before and during the late war I had very strongly the feeling that all South-Western Europe, bounded on the North by the populations along both sides of the Rhine from its source to its disappearance in Holland, formed one, Frankish people, the difference between a Rhenish German and a French Fleming being negligible, except that the Rhenish German is much more like a meridional Frenchman in temperament and in the values he attaches to life. And until relatively late days the culture of the United States was so exactly the same in its provenance as that of those Frankish peoples that, culturally at least, the inhabitants of the United States too belonged to that comity. During the war

that consciousness in myself grew to a fever heat, to an obsession, to a conviction of ultimate fulfilment.

Lately, it is said, that tendency has betrayed signs of weakening because of the miserable activities of the politicians and financiers who control our helpless destinies: even to French eyes the Atlantic has, as I have already said, assumed the aspect of a central lake from which radiates not culture but all the material prosperity of the big battalion kind that is to be mopped up. You will be told that France, casting her eyes upon that lake and its emanations, is changing rapidly the habits of its peoples in the direction of the industrialism, the mass-production, the overcrowding and the ideal of building up record fortunes that we principally have given to the world. If that were so, heavy indeed would be our responsibility.

But as yet it is not so. The reflection that I have here presented to you of this great tranquil country with its frugal, industrious, eternally prospering peoples is true of the great bulk of the land and the humanity here to be found; is as nearly true as a human presentment of its own experiences can be. If I have driven home at all the immense difference that exists between people and government, between the quiet peoples of France and the intolerable activities of the boulevards, the newspaper offices, and the coulisses where swarm the politicians, I shall have done our State some service. . . . For, in the end, even

national manifestations shaped by demagogues must round themselves into some semblance of the aspirations of the individual. You cannot misrepresent all of the people all the time. To Henri IV succeeded Louis XIV; to him Napoleon; to him the Third Republic, and the Third Republic is nearer to being an expression of France of the broad acres and the vineyards and the handicrafts than were any others of those reapers of embattled glories, just as the agonies undergone round Verdun were a truer expression of this people than the eagles of the Old Guard, the steenkirks of Fontenoy—or even the white plume of Ivry and the banner of du Guesclin.

And there is this to be remembered: When in a great line of parade across a world-wide plain before the last end of the world there shall march all the glories of France, surely the blue tin hats, and the eagles and the banners with the lilies and the oriflamme of the *poule au pot* shall be there—for it would be a poor Destiny that should not attend to the susceptibilities of the simple heroic souls that died here and there in ditches in defence of Provence. Always in defence of Provence. But amongst those *panaches*, innumerably outnumbering them shall go the mahl-stick emblems, the symbolic lyres, the snows of goose-quills, the golden alembics, the *mappa mundi's*, the philosophers' skulls, the heraldic ladles, the be-scutcheoned wine-presses—and the distaffs!—which are the glories that France has not kept to herself but given to the world. Yes,

they will all be there, from Peire Vidal who loved imprudently and Bertran de Born who drove the world mad with his *sirventes* and sent out beef, bread and wine to his starving besiegers, to the makers of the music for the words of *Brave Marin* and *Auprès de ma Blonde*, and to Clouet and, if you will, Fragonard, and Ingres and Manet; and without doubt to Pasteur, and Voltaire, and the First Inventors of Everything that the French newspapers are always claiming for France; and to Renan and Gautier and the composer of *Carmen* . . . and naturally I will bring in poor dear old Flaubert who gave us Félicité and St Julian the Hospitaller though all my young French friends will sit on my head. . . .

I notice that I have left out Joan of Arc and Lafayette. Well, they would take you long enough to reckon up before you had paid tribute to them—all the glories of France!

CHAPTER IX

FROM THE GREY STONE

(L'ENVOI)

LET us sit down upon this rock, a thousand feet up or so, nearly perpendicular, above the Mediterranean. Here once passed Hannibal, Cæsar, the Saracens, and Napoleon, going south-eastward. Let us contemplate the inevitable blue of the sea over which have sailed such unnumbered admirals and argosies. Let us attempt to consider the world solely from the point of view of pure thought—and the Arts ; around us the rocks with their tufts of rosemary, wood-spurge, thyme, a little lavender, and, above all, with their olive trees. Far below are the inevitable white marble and suburban palm trees of the water's edge.

They say that the olive is not indigenous to Provence : that the Phocians brought, centuries before the birth of Christ, this grey and drily whispering symbol of the world's agonies and contemplations. They say, indeed, that of all the catalogue of vegetable luxuries—

" *Parmi la végétation la plus luxuriante : pins, oliviers, poivriers, caroubiers, agaves, mimosas,*

orangers, citronniers, d'où surgissent de coquettes villas et de somptueux hôtels "[1]

—of all the fashionable horticulturist's catalogue the mandarine orange tree alone is here indigenous. Even the vine was brought by the Romans in the first century—or rather it was smuggled in in defiance of the laws of the Romans, who desired to limit wine-growing to Italy proper. I do not know how people know these things about the indigenousnesses of trees, and usually it is better to disbelieve them. It seems absurd to say that the elm is not indigenous to the British Midlands, or the thorn tree to Kent. But for the marine borders of Provence one may believe it; there is the gum tree, the omnipresent eucalyptus, with its pallid, improbable trunk, its distracted, blue-grey foliage, and its flowers smelling of Sundays in church in influenza time—to prove it. For this is the country into which pushes all the world —to find sunshine and utter leisure, or to forget the wonders of wireless telephony. And, coming so, down all the ages, all the peoples, meaning their sojourns to be eternal and their plunderings without end, brought with them the herb with which each could least dispense. So that, here, in gardens, or straggling beyond the borders of gardens, as is the habit of Northern flora, you find not only the gum, the pepper tree, the banana and the date-palm, but the wall-flower, the polyanthus, the stock and, above all, the common

[1] *House-agents' Guide to Villefranche* (Le Syndicat d'Initiative), p. 5.

marigold with its orange-daisy head that with us is almost a weed. We have come here to plunder and to settle, but we cannot live without—*Calendula officinalis.*

At the bottom of the hill stands a "coquette villa." On its façade its owner caused to be painted Latin words—*Inveni portum : Spes et Fortuna valete.* . . . And so on : as who should say : "Hope and Fortune, farewell. I have had dealings with you. Deal now with others, for here I have found a safe harbour. From these moorings I will never more be torn."

Alas ! he had those words painted up in mid-fourteen. He brought with him a large supply of *his* indispensable herb. He had made a fortune ; but not, so one may gather from the inscription, so large a fortune as he had once hoped—from coal-mines, or from cotton-gins, rigging the market, brothels. . . . How is it that fortunes are made ? And, under his rose pergola, he was to pass the rest of his days, eating his sauerkraut in the sun. Now, in the deserted garden the sauerkraut cabbage runs wild, but the foot of the owner no longer walks the tangled paths and the pious aspiration fades on the sun-baked plaster of the façade.

Nor does his shade languish alone : for that is the epitome of the life of conquerors here. And, sitting on the grey stone once brushed by the feet of Hannibal, of Cæsar, of the Saracens, we look out to sea, and on the purple horizon, like pink clouds seeking to form a pyramid, rises

Corsica! Another symbol. But, indeed, everything that here exists is a symbol! You pass and conquer here—with your artillery on sledges or with your elephants; beneath the thin silver crescent you ride on your Barbary coursers; in your elegant landau of the last lot of forties, or in your automobile. With the scimitar you conquer and enslave, or with your mere bank-book; for Peace has her atrocities! But you pass: and of you remain only the gum, the pepper tree, the date-palm, the polyanthus—and the pot marigold.

But above all remains the olive tree—the symbol of thought, of passionless contemplation, of the agony of God, of Pallas Athene, of peace, of the Arts—the one symbol of permanence, perhaps because it asks so little. It is a good tree near which to sit and regard the world merely from the standpoint of thought and of the Arts. It is good, in short, because it has no monomania; its branches push in no one direction; it has no haste; it has reduced its necessities to a mere minimum. You might call it listless were it not so persistent; being so persistent it must be styled contemplative. It asks for no attention, no prunings, no waterings, no enrichment of the soil; its roots take from the interstices of rocky hill-sides all that it needs, and at the due season it lets drop its fruits that supply to the world the most beneficent of all fluids. Think of the trees of our damp woodlands pushing, strangling, like the denizens of some Black Hole of Calcutta, trampling down the one the other in the mad

effort to get to the light. There is no spot in which Nature seems more cruel than in a Northern copse, that place of butcheries, strangulation, secret burials and remorseless survivals. And without the attentions of armies of wood-reeves, drain-makers, land-stewards, keepers, earth-stoppers, drive-cutters and the rest—without the scientific cares of a whole Ministry of Woods per nation, these woods become mere swamps and no tree survives to be a forest giant!

And even at that, in those dank glades, you must run, hurry, ride hallooing, or tramp, gun on shoulder, for three hundred and sixty days out of the year—just to keep flesh-warm. I suppose that for five days of an average twelve-month, and maybe for six in a leap year, you may comfortably sit and think in our Northern woods—say for three hours of five days per year. Well, fifteen hours per year is not enough to give to thought. Yet. how can we give more? We must retire into our houses and devote our minds to getting coal with which to keep going our open fireplaces. So we are styled barbarians.

Things that spell death to Thought and to the Arts are discomfort, cold, rain, hunger, poverty and care, or, in the alternative, over-comfort, repletion, wealth, waste, display and absence of care. Moderation and modesty are bad too, but not so bad as immoderation and immodesty. It is, in short, bad to be brought up as the careful child of an impoverished widow: but far worse to be son of the automobile owner whose chariot

swings along the Corniche, the owner being owner because of his talent for robbing the widow, the orphan—and the thinker.

Let us, then, sit here and imagine a world in which reign only Thought and the Arts. The air is exactly flesh-heat and still; as far as Corsica there is no sail upon the Mediterranean; round us those ceaseless whisperers, the olive trees, and those incomparable sieves for the wind, the tufts of rosemary, thyme and lavender, are for once silent, and a flat rock with another for back makes an admirable seat. And, indeed, to call up such a world needs no feat of the imagination, since that world exists. It would be absurd to say that the world of Catullus, Heine, Shakespeare, Corneille, Newton, Descartes and Renan is not as real—and as regnant!—as the world of casinos and Promenades des Anglais for whose bloomings the manure is the sweat of mines, factories, offices and brothels. It is real enough, though you cannot reach it in a Rolls-Royce along any Corniche of this world.

Astonishingly real—yet amazingly elusive! When we were young, amidst simple problems as plain as the nose on your face, we trod the earth with buoyancy; greeted fearlessly all the doubts of mankind. And the solution of the Riddle of the Universe seemed always just round the corner, just on the tip of the tongue. The next five minutes was to bring us to it. I don't know how we lost the illusion, but at some point it was gone—as if at the end of some long stage of railway

journey we had found that we no longer held the copy of yesterday's paper that we had meant to keep. Its place is taken by another illusion—the illusion that somewhere there is a region where the clearnesses of Thought and the exactitudes of Art are honoured: a region where we might find refuge and peace.

You would say it must be somewhere, in some fourth or fifth dimension. You can almost see its landscapes, certainly its atmosphere, blue-grey still, like horizontal wraiths of blue smoke across the mellow gilt of calf-backed books. And in that region neither wealth nor prestige are desired; neither medals nor cups; no gold, no bouquets; no carbuncles, ermine or crowns; only clear thought, beautiful images, peace, and the whisper of olive leaves. There the poor dare plead!

Well, let us sit upon our rock and think. Far away to the right, like a thin water-beetle letting run out behind it spinnings of pale silk, something hastens from the horizon: the evening boat from Corsica to Nice, I dare say.

And what stands out in our world of Thought and the Arts is this: It is only England and France that matter to our European civilisation of to-day—England for all the finenesses that she has produced and ignored; France for all the glories that would have been for ever hers had she not owned Provence. On the fate of England, trembling in the balance, and on the destinies of France, hang the hopes of all the European world.

Let us, for heaven's sake, be insular and—as long as we include France—bold, bad, remorselessly exclusive. We are not now in a world that concerns itself with international commerce, sham diplomacies, politico-economics; hardly even with military good-fellowship. These are not the concern of Thought or of the Arts: they are the games of savages who out of ham-bones, skins, beef-tins and dyed potato sacks make gods for themselves. Did you ever talk to a diplomat? I have talked with one, almost omnipotent, about international affairs when he happened to be rather drunk and I very angry. If you had heard that conversation you would know why the world of great industries is staggering to its ruin amidst imprecations.

So let us, for heaven's sake, say that it is only these two countries that matter. Imagine the bottom of the sea falling out and, into the cavity, England going down. There would be a considerable whirlpool. Imagine France to follow: there would be no more world—not any world of Thought and the Arts. Not anywhere. Its backbone would be gone.

For professional or personal reasons you may dislike, or profess to dislike, the French spirit; you may deny merit to every French masterpiece, but you cannot get away from the fact that French Art and French Thought form the touchstone for the Art and Thought of the world. The line Diderot-Chateaubriand-Stendhal-Flaubert in pure expression, with the

Renan-Taine-France strand for analytic-propagandist expression, is our standard as far as method is concerned. Ignore for the moment the artistic side; you may reproach Renan for his anti-Christism, Taine as a reactionary, or France as an unscrupulous Left-Propagandist; but, whether you be Left or Right by temperament or for profit, you cannot get away from it that the Renan-Taine-France method in controversy is *the* method in controversy. There is no other for you if you wish to destroy an opponent.

Hannibal, the annalist tells us, made his road smooth over the rocks where we are sitting—*aceto infuso*—by pouring warm vinegar upon them. These words have puzzled me ever since, with a beswinged breech, I sat upon the hard bench of the little schoolboy and dropped round tears upon the words. For I could not believe our form master's gloss to the effect that Hannibal's pouring warm vinegar on the troglodytic heaps above Roquebrune dissolved the great stones so that they crumbled into a road soft for the feet of his elephants. I not only couldn't believe it, but I could not even profess to believe it. So it was: "Boy! down with your small clothes!"

But I believe it to-day. Renan, up against an impregnable rock of Gallican Papistry, poured out the warm vinegar of his style; Taine, courteous reactionary, *his*; in the Bergeret series M. France poured out *his*: and convents and monas-

teries vanished from the soil of France; the Revolution was discredited; the Dreyfusards triumphed. . . . These triumphs were only temporary. But there is no lasting triumph. Look at Corsica out there, the purple pyramid with, against it, on the warm-coloured sea, one triangular, lonely, pink sail!

Controversy, of course, is of small value in the world of Thought; of none in the world of the Arts. But it is for ever confusing the issues. It is obvious that a Proper Man should pay some attention to such subjects as religion, politics, patriotism and philosophy as it is practised. Then, the popular mouthings of a Huxley or a Haeckel, the pompous acridities of a Herbert Spencer, the incisive blood-savageries of a Nietzsche are a nuisance to a quiet world. Even Schopenhauer, with his terrific sentences and his, at bottom, misty sentimentalism of the North, causes on our still mirror a blur of half-thought, and even Darwin a mist.

Darwin, obviously, is different: a great, courteously absent figure, regretful if his movements knock off the tea-table a whole dozen of priceless porcelain vessels, but still inexorable. That makes it all the more lamentable that he wrote so dullingly. For such a book as the *Descent of Man* is not dull, but it *abruti*'s the reader. The endless, undistinguished paragraphs; the absolute incapacity of the writer to put any fact dramatically; the stream of words inserted to make up a pedestrian cadence so that

the pregnant fact strikes hardly any note at all in the reader's mind. all these things create an atmosphere of intense regret. For obviously every child should read Darwin—whereas only very stupid men *can* read him without effort. That is a great pity.

No doubt the tempestuous atmosphere of controversy in which this great man lived, Huxley & Co. bludgeoning Gladstone, Wilberforce & Co., induced a certain timidity in his actual writing, and he was unfortunate to be born in an era of moralising. Think how differently he might have written had his contemporaries been Hume and Fontenelle instead of Soapy Sam and Monsignor Dupanloup! Then we should not have had this sad, this intolerably sad, passage in the general summary of the *Descent of Man*:

"The moral faculties are generally *and justly* [italics not in original] esteemed as of higher value than the intellectual powers. But we should bear in mind that the activity of the mind in vividly recalling past impressions is one of the fundamental though secondary bases of conscience. This affords the strongest possible argument for educating and stimulating in all possible ways the intellectual faculties of every human being. No doubt a man with a vapid mind, if his social affections and sympathies are well developed, will be led to good actions and may have a fairly sensitive conscience. But whatever renders the imagination more vivid and strengthens the habit of recalling and comparing first impressions, will

make conscience more sensitive and may even somewhat compensate for weak social affections and sympathies."

What a chloroform of a style; but for the Victorians, what an electric thought! And what a waste!

The function of the *Descent of Man* was to perform for Protestantism almost exactly what *Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse* did for papistry of the Archbishop Dupanloup type. I say *Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse* rather than any other work of Renan quite advisedly. For, when he came to write that almost most wonderful of all volumes of reminiscences and to *poétiser un peu*, Renan had done his job. The facile papistry, the lace trimmings of the Second Empire were by that time gone, and Renan could afford, with tender and reminiscent cat's paws, the claws drawn in, to put together a poetised image of old Breton cathedral cities, of seminaries, of ancient peasant nobility; could afford to remember tenderly the faith of his mother.

The task for Darwin was by no means so finally accomplished when, in 1871, he published the *Descent of Man*; yet he knew it to be accomplished as far as it ever would be. He had knocked out of existence the seven-day creation —but Protestantism, unlike Catholicism, which is merely long-lived and Protean, is immortal, simply because it is not a faith but a frame of mind. Yet, allowing for that immense difference, the tempers of Renan and of Darwin when they

were writing these two books were much the same. For each of them the hard fighting was over and, benevolently, they could employ themselves in getting together a few more instances.

Yet the one did no more than add another to the immense list of *biblia abiblia*; the other produced one of the classic masterpieces, one of the "type" books of the world. Why?

The answer is probably to be found in the "*and justly*" of the passage quoted from the *Descent of Man*—is to be found foreshadowed in these two words. For what business was it of Darwin's to take sides in a matter that could not concern him? Or, having taken sides, how could he devote himself, in the rest of the paragraph, to destroying the position thus once endorsed? For either morality is of more service to the community than intellect or it is not. It does not matter which way you answer, but the answer must be a "yes" or a "no."

Darwin, in fact, was either temporising or merely lazy in face of a department of thought that was none of his. And that probably is the reason why French thought is so much more keen than is our thought. We can afford to be lazy or to temporise in matters of thought that do not concern us: we may, as individuals, have to be exact about biology, but we can afford to be merely visionary or deferentially official when it comes to Life. For we do not need to live by thought alone. This the French-

man must: he is too poor not to. He must have a clear vision of a whole cosmogony, or he must leave lacunæ. He cannot be clear as to critical evidence and write hazily or without brave vision about biology: he must leave biology out.

This difference between the two peoples may be temperamental, but I hope it is not. It may be due to climate, to relative standards of comfort; but I have gradually come to believe that it is due to the geographical pressure of life—to the fact that France is the road to here—to the Mediterranean, with its sun, its olives, and its illusion of easy wealth. It is only an illusion, but in the minds of all non-Mediterranean races it is an illusion stronger than the dream that the streets of London are paved with gold.

I became converted to this idea whilst writing an anecdote. As on that occasion I was writing in French, I will recapitulate it here since it struck me very much.

In another landscape then, with an outfield of thistles and a ground of dust, we were playing cricket, with axe-handles for bats, beef-boxes for wickets, and a tennis-ball. We were jumping about and making a good deal of noise: the ball ran in among the feet of picketed mules. The battalion had just come out from a nasty place.

I perceived, standing twenty yards off, a Frenchman that I knew—a man of very good, serious, high-bourgeois family, very tall, unbend-

ing, and unexhilarated. A pillar of blue-grey, with a blue-grey helmet, he was very lightly bending back so as almost to sit on his walking-stick, and, quite motionless, he thus resembled a metal tripod. Through his monocle he was regarding my men, and he bit his moustache, which was cropped to resemble exactly that of the late Lord Kitchener. As I approached he said, in English :

" I find that very shocking ! To jump about and cry out amongst the dust where have fallen so many men ! "

I said :

" Mais, M. le Capitaine ! nous venons de sortir des tranchées et cela remonte le moral des hommes ! "

He repeated expressionlessly :

" All the same, I find that very shocking. When one comes out of the trenches one should think. Perhaps one should even pray a little : but certainly one should think."

I may point out that my friend was not only, like most of the French high-bourgeoisie, a Positivist, which is the same thing as an agnostic, but also an admirable performer with the football—of international rank if I am not greatly mistaken. At any rate, I remember that before the era of those troubles I had argued stiffly with him—against his devotion to football, which I foresaw becoming as much a nuisance in France as it is in England. I had indeed also argued with him, but more mildly, in favour of the Church of Rome and

so, by implication, in favour of prayer during times of stress. That had been two years before and had taken place in the Citadelle of Carcassonne —in the barracks where, on a vast whitewashed wall, in red letters, in the dining-hall stood the legend that I have already once quoted. The chance of those times had thrown us together again.

Well, then, in face of that crude realism our positions completely reversed themselves, and he stood, not so much grim as with the silent intentness of a cold duellist putting aside my arguments with his one statement. From time to time he would look up in the course of a monstrous shell going overhead to fall far behind us, then he would repeat that in the intervals of desperate days perhaps one should pray a little. Certainly one should think. And that is the real lesson of France to the world of abstract thought and of the Arts.

As for me, I was furious—properly enough, considering the time and the place and the natures and vicissitudes of my comrades. I never looked up at any shell: I was too heated. And when—as was inevitable—he made his speech to the effect that no doubt I should look at things differently had we a devastating foe astride our islands from Manchester to York I fair let him have it, as we used to say.

But I think he was right—if, for the occasion, grudging. The truth is that the French cannot afford to be thought-free—not ever! They

never could, and, make what military dispositions they may, they never will be able to. As long as they possess Provence or one inch of the shores of the Mediterranean they will always have, stretched from Manchester to York, as it were, potentially devastating foes. Centuries ago it was us with our Black Princes *chevauché*ing from Calais to Bordeaux; and four centuries later it was all Northern Europe from Dutch William's days to Marlborough's, to Frederick the Great's, to the days of the world alliances against the French Republic. Yesterday we know of: to-morrow we do not. It may well be us once more, should we grow poor again and the Mediterranean shores retain their illusion of easy wealth. These are, indeed, the tears of things: it is well to think about them.

I will permit myself another military anecdote. It was my sad fate towards the end of the late occurrences to be ordered to lecture on history and the like to several thousand Other Ranks—and twice a day! And twice a day I used to ask the question—it was in our border country of raids and forays, a very northerly north!

"If you had lashings of money: all the money you could ask for, and if you had lashings of leave: all the leave in the world! what would you do?"

According to the official records of attendance, before completing that tour of duty I must have asked that question of over 210,000 men and of several thousand officers. I never but once got an

answer beyond a usual gasp of agony at the image I had raised. But, happening to lecture to my own regiment, which regarded me, I suppose, as more amiable and less formidably highbrow—for to other units I was generally introduced by a regimental sergeant-major, or sometimes even by a general!—I asked that usual question. From the back of the dining-hall, 09 Evans, Pte. D., the licensed humorist of the battalion, answered my "What would you do?" He called out bravely but with immense feeling:

"*Go mad!*"

It gave me the chance to answer myself better than usual, for after many orderly rooms I knew 09 Evans as well as I knew any man. And:

"Oh no, you would not," I answered. "With a white waistcoat and a Panama hat, with a fat cigar in your lips, three dozen of Veuve Clicquot in the rumble, a tart in your arms, and a gramophone braying beside the chauffeur, you'd be running down through the South of France to make a hog of yourself in a white-and-gilt hotel at Monte Carlo."

And a dozen awestruck voices whispered: "Gawd! Old 'Oof's struck it!"

They called me "Old 'Oof" in that unit. But whether they were disclosing their own secret thoughts or merely referring to the known proclivities of 09 Evans, I don't know. A little of both, I dare say.

Now, supposing I had asked the whole quarter

million of All Ranks at once, not in detail: What would they do if they were down and out, homeless men, but with small arms, Lewis guns, ammunition, Mills bombs, side arms, gas cylinders, transport officers—but no rations?

It is really that possibility that makes the French think when they come out of the offices of daily life. For it is that question that gets itself asked in the hearts of men, down all the centuries, not merely in Yorkshire or Pomerania, but in Bokhara and Bagdad and Samarcand. They would march towards the Mediterranean, and the peoples that lay in their path might well pray. In the meantime they think!

And that "Gawd! Old 'Oof's struck it!" deeply uttered, gives the measure of our disservice to the world. Our Thought, heaven help us, is apt to seem the product of brains filled with greenish porridge; but that is rather our own affair. If we do not choose to cultivate our grey matter, if we choose to let it become an obsolete organ, we miss the highest of pleasures. We substituted for it—in the last century—Victorian morality! That also does no harm in the world save to ourselves alone, and possibly to America. And it is a mistake too violently to undervalue Victorian morality in its aspect as a material safeguard.

A morality is a race-era protective device: as thy day, says the most gracious of all promises, so shall thy strength be. So, for the nineteenth century, Victoria, Queen, aided by Samuel Smiles,

hack-moralist, produced the type-proverb: Honesty is the best policy! From that arose the monstrous comfort-legend—the monstrous legend of over-eating, over-drinking (which is quite different from "drinking"), over-cushioning, over pigskin-leather furnishing, over-servanting, and the whole tale of the Late Victorian "Establishment." All that was the product of Victorian morality, and the Great White Queen saw to it that no one got on, at least socially, who did not subscribe to the morality of Mr. Smiles. It was a pretty complete affair—that life over which Mr. Galsworthy is now shedding tears.

From this hard, grey stone, say 900 feet above the Mediterranean, it may well seem a fairly loathsome one. In this France, from the south to the far north of the Pas-de-Calais, every man, from the railway porter to the legitimist Prince de So-and-so, eats every day the same sort of fare, and no man not an Englishly corrupted millionaire eats more than one meat meal a day. Nor, with the same reservation, in any French home will you find the English club arm-chair—and some of us content ourselves with the grey stone that was once brushed by the feet of Hannibal, of Cæsar, of the Saracens. Here—or hereabouts in this South Country of the olive trees Epictetus wrote the greatest of all counsels to humanity: "*Non dux, sed comes, voluptas.*" Let Victorian comfort be, not your commander, but your comrade in the ranks.

But if Victorian comfort, establishments, and club arm-chairs have ruined the world—as we may hope to prove—we may as well speculate for a moment as to whether the world might not have been much worse without them. Victorianism came at a time of immense, of incredible, material development. Supposing the Court of Victoria had been as corrupt as the Court of Napoleon III! I do not mean that England would have been as poor as France: she would have had her immense resources and would have exploited them. But she would have been immeasurably more trying. As it is, Victorian standards lasted for just long enough to let us have to our credit the only noble, the only fine, national action that recorded history can show the world. We ourselves have forgotten that; but when we are legends and one with Leonidas, the world will not forget that last aftermath of the Victorians. Perhaps we have even two fine gestures to our credit; perhaps the freeing of Ireland was the second. Or perhaps Ireland is not really free and it was not. At any rate we have the one. No other nation can show the like. One may remember that whilst pouring warmed vinegar upon most of our other achievements. With our naïve morality and the greenish porridge of our brain-pans we saved for the world the Thought of France.

Nevertheless, in a changed era that particular protective morality, conducing as it did to that gross standard of comfort, had already become the flail of the world—since it had come to typify

the lowest common denominator of humanity. The Late Victorian Englishman had, heaven knows, every right to call himself God's Englishman; to regard himself as being, he alone, *Homo Europæus Sapiens:* his clothes, manners, habits, fare, trappings, vehicles, sports—his establishment had become, in each direction, the type for the comfortable of all the world—for the Japanese as for the inhabitant of Berlin, for the buck negro as for the Turkish revolutionist. This the world cannot afford. Only one race at a time can get as much out of the earth of the globe. And that is the tragedy.

Below the grey stone on which we sit, below the belt of rocks, lavender and olive trees, runs a white ribbon of life of an intense vulgarity. It is the expressed ideal of 09 Evans, a tragedy of waste, of brayings, of pimpings, marbles, cheap gildings. It is what *we* have given to the world—a product of peace more terrible than the product of any wars. And, indeed, of such peace-products wars are the inevitable consequences. We fought lately—and the best of us died—in order to decide which overfed women-folk of which pot-bellied group of men should hang more costly skins of wild beasts, eat, make one braying noise or another and more luxuriantly commit fornications along that white ribbon. It is we Anglo-Saxons who are now enjoying these pleasures here. It would be better if we didn't: better for us and better for all the world.

What we need is a line of devastating foes,

stretched always from York to Manchester. Then, when we came home from our offices we might sit and think. We should have to—as down the centuries the French have had to.

It is dangerous to write in that way—to have the air of making concessions to Puritanism, Puritanism being worse for Thought and the Arts than a wilderness of 09 Evanses. The Proper Man would be better engaged riding, drunk with that latter hero and his female companions, than in sitting with the late Mr. Comstock in heaven or with the English official critic in his study. To sit drunk in a motor-car is merely not to think. The other two gentlemen employ themselves in murdering thought and the expression of thought.

All the same, an impoverished England would be a better England; a sempiternally threatened England, a better England still. For then we should discover not merely the necessity, but also the pleasure, the glory, of Thought.

In the end, a civilisation is measured by the proportion of its citizens that can sit still on grey rocks and think. There is no higher pleasure; there is no other pleasure absolutely unharmful to the republic or the world. Nor is there any other occupation that so leads to Empire. Obviously there must also be Saturnalia—but they must be reasonably limited in duration and not held up as the sole ideal for an imperial race. *Non dux, sed comes, voluptas.* . . . It is true that the Athenians went to war with the inhabitants

of Megara because these latter would, continuously and without consideration, trample over, make paths through and destroy the Athenian garlic fields. In spite of that, those Greeks, of all peoples the most frugal and uncushioned, seated on the rocks above the Mediterranean—still those Greeks rule in the world of Thought or of the Arts. You may write what you like to disprove the glories of the Age of Pericles—or of the Age of Flaubert!—but still, with Gladstone, Soapy Sam, and the Duke of Argyll, you must be Platonian teleologist; or, with Darwin, the biologists, and him of Croisset, be Aristotelian-empiric. That is because so large a proportion of the Hellenic citizens could take pleasure in sitting on the grey rocks amongst the olive trunks, and because the highest crown to which they could aspire was fashioned not of gold, but of parsley.

On these heights the darkness falls very quickly, and then there are said to be Presences. Do you, beside me, remember the story we heard the other day—about the charming young couple who . . . "broke it off" is, I believe, the phrase? I have been thinking about it.

"There was never," you remember one of them said, "such a place for sunsets and the sea below, the lighthouse, the Mediterranean!" A great sea you may voyage ten years upon if you do not know it to be a lake to cross in a day. Julian, then, of Birmingham, and Maid Marjorie, coming, I believe, from Leamington, went walking round

the Cape. There were olive branches dry above their heads. There were marble clinkers, crushed beneath their feet. Round them the trunks of pines trod a bewildering sarabande—slow! You could see no foot move: grey, gliding as they walked.

They carried between them an inclination born of country Sundays in summer, of duck-ponds, pink clouds, the showers of April, Midland hundred-acre grass fields, Birmingham chimneys, spring exhibitions of the Royal Academy, and a million snapshots of the daily papers. So flesh yearned to flesh as chastely as it might through Harris homespuns which are non-conductors. And the night fell. But they were both—both English to the backbone.

They were inarticulate: he with a slowly bovine, tranquil glance, honest as mutton; she, with summer-sky eyes and quickly flushing cheeks, all peach down—twenty-three and twenty-nine. Far below them on extravagantly artificial grass, fantastic under light bulbs, beneath palm trees sat their careful, hoping mothers over the coffee-cups, after dinner. On the lawns of the *Hôtel Splendide* they discussed—as they discuss who are expecting shortly to become "connections"—the disillusionments, the long strain of life. There are, of course, "prices"; there are, of course, the *famulae*—those who should sweep the hearth and more usually neglect the duty. These are the tears of things! . . . But, with astonishment, each lady, agreeing that the disillusionment, the

long strain of each came from a not impossible, but still sufficiently trying and disillusioning He—each lady discovered to the other that their two males, each, had in them a delicate spot, a not usually alluded to flaw. English to the backbone though both of the children were, Julian père had, as you might say, a touch of the tar-brush, and the father of blushing Maid Marjorie, with her summer-sky eyes and peach-bloom cheeks—as again you might say, a yellow streak. . . . Possibly a Huguenot great-grandmother, something of Castilian in the ancestry—or Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian, Palestinian, Romany, Roumanian. Neither, at any rate, was pure Birmingham or pure Leamington. And both ladies sighed—for from such blots on the scutcheon comes undependability that gives rise to the disillusionment, the long strain of life.

The night fell; the arms of the lighthouse whirled; the two ladies drew together their wraps. Up on the dark foreland were their two children: it was fortunate that they were both English to the backbone. Julian mère, gathering her sewing together, would depart to the *Hôtel Albion Excelsior et de la Grande Bretagne*—for, naturally, in the circumstances, the two families could not sleep in the *Hôtel Splendide*. There are the *convenances*!

What had happened then, up amongst the trunks of the tall pines and of the distracted olive trees? There was a stone seat there, more ancient than the Phocians, dating from before

the days of the Etruscans. But you would say that the whirling arms of the lighthouse would have kept away all evil influences! At any rate that young marriageable pair appear to have sat there all night. Perhaps they thought; perhaps even they prayed a little.

A little after dawn they emerged from the pine and olive wood, walking down-hill towards the marble and gilt hotels—marriageable still, obviously, but determined not to marry the one the other. And this resoluteness neither the pleadings of Maid Marjorie mère nor those of the wife of Julian père could at all shake. The one used the word "compromising"; the other foreshadowed what would—what *could*—be asked round the hearths of the residential districts that encircle the city of Birmingham. Their arguments were unavailing. Marry the one the other the young people would not!

What peeping, prying, embracing, interlacing, stately moving, Divine featured and bosomed beings pervade these rocky hill-sides after dark? What happened there on that cliff with the old rock-seat? For to you, as I understand, Maid Marjorie has confided that she would bear children to no man that could not come to her in the guise of Hermes Trisme . . . Trisme. . . . She was not certain of the rest. To me Julian has confided that no woman should share his bed, to bear him children, who was not the living image of Astarte of the Syrians. And, both, they sighed deeply.

The two mothers declare in unison that that is what it is to have in you a touch of the tar-brush, a yellow streak. But the reason seems insufficient. For who of us that is British to the backbone hasn't? Not you! Not I! Hardly one. It may be the saving of us yet. . . .

But over Mont Albon, with its Saracen towers, the crescent moon is declining; the constellations are appearing in the dusky purple of the heavens; mists arise on all the headlands; the Mediterranean is a darker purple than that of wine. What is that that rustled in the rosemary? "Did you see that? Peeping out beside that gnarled olive trunk?" . . . "Yes! I saw it!"

I think we had better go down the hill before it grows too dark and take the tram to Monte Carlo.

St Jean-Cap-Ferrat, *1st March* 1923.
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